

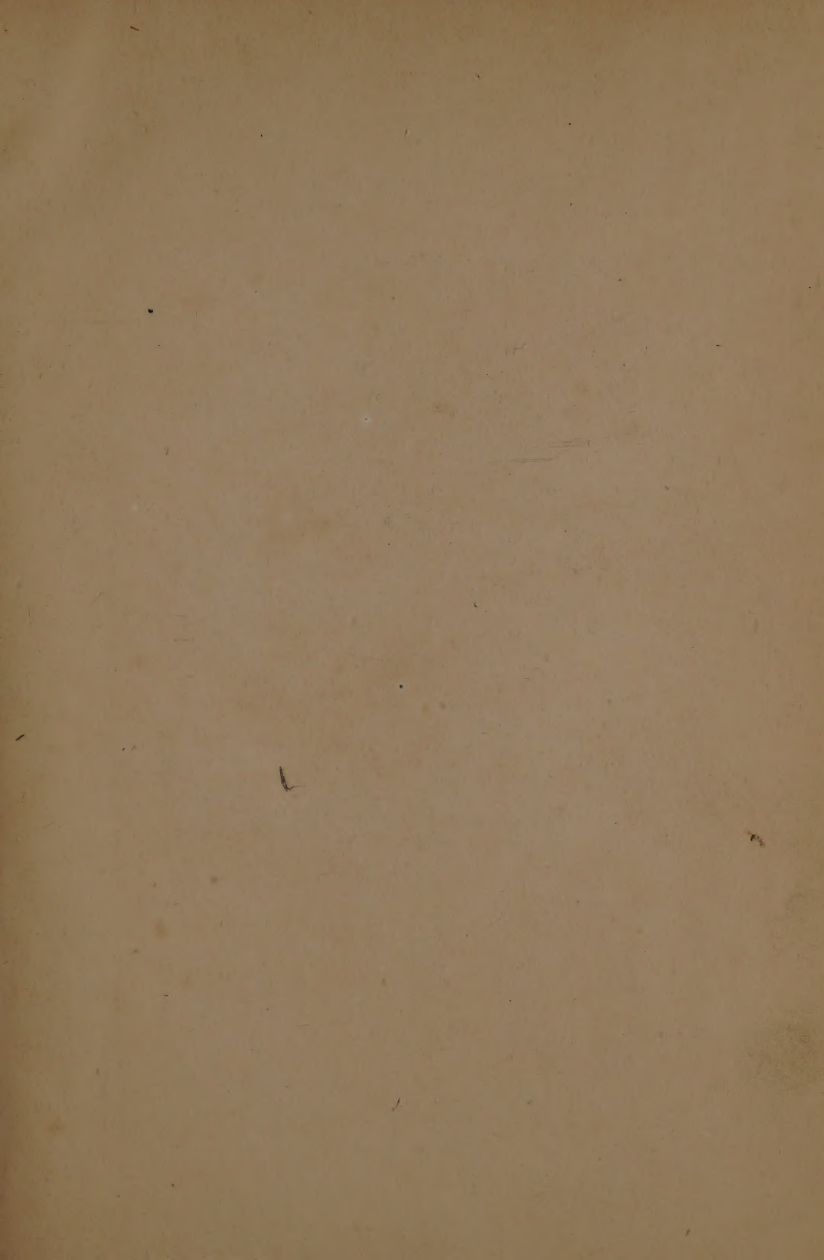
88 Holbein's

Dance of Death

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ANCIENT BEDSTEAD AT AIX-LA-CHAPELLE.
Drawn & Engraved from the original by W. Marshall, R.S.A.

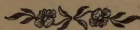
Holbein's

Dance of Death,

WITH

AN HISTORICAL AND LITERARY

INTRODUCTION.



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The Dance of Death.

INTRODUCTION.

HE personification of Death under the form of a Skeleton is not traceable to a very early period, neither do we find it embodied as a figure in ancient painting and sculpture, although it is alluded to as an agent of the gods by the early poets. Homer speaks of the twin brothers, Sleep and Death, and Hesiod alludes to them both as the children of Night. But in this we trace the poetic translation of natural causes, which was so striking a feature in early mythology. It is in the Sacred Writings of the Jews that we first meet with an embodiment of this power as an absolute being sent from God—"The Angel of Death,"—who was not a mere metaphorical personage, but a positive creature endowed with power to terminate life whenever it was directed to be

closed. This angel it was who destroyed the army of Sennacherib ; as the action is powerfully narrated in II Kings, xix, 35—"And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand : and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses." The ancient Egyptians, the earliest nation with whose mythology we are acquainted, appear to have had no impersonation of death as a member of the band of spirits who ruled mortal destiny. Death, as a cessation of bodily activity, was represented in the form of a mummy ; and Herodotus tells us, that a figure in that shape was introduced at their festive tables, to remind the guests of their mortality, and that they should now "drink and enjoy themselves." Sir J. G. Wilkinson* is inclined to the belief that this was done with a strictly moral purpose, and that it was intended as an exhortation to all present, "while enjoying the blessings of this world, to bear in mind that their existence was precarious, and that death, which all ought to be prepared to meet, must eventually close their earthly career. Thus, while the guests were permitted, and even exhorted to indulge in conviviality, the pleasures of the table, and the mirth so congenial to their lively dispositions, the prudent solicitude of the priests did not fail to watch over their actions, and, by

* Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians, vol. ii, p. 410.

this salutary hint, to show them the propriety of putting a certain degree of restraint upon their conduct." He says that this custom was "perverted by the Greeks," who continued it only as an incitement to enjoy the pleasures of life; but it is by no means certain, that it was not done with the same motive by the Egyptians. Petronius describes a similar scene at a Roman table. "To us, who were drinking, and admiring the splendour of the entertainment, a silver model of a man was brought by a servant, so contrived, that its joints and moveable vertebræ could be bent in any direction. After it had been produced upon the table two or three times, and had been made, by means of springs, to assume different attitudes, Trimalchio exclaimed, 'Alas, unhappy lot, how truly man is nought! similar to this shall we all be, when death has carried us away: therefore, while we are allowed to live, let us live well.'"* The same sentiments are enunciated by the poets Anacreon and Horace.

It was not until after the Jews had passed into captivity that we find the superstition of their conquerors ingrafted on their own belief. M. Alfred Maury, in a paper in the '*Revue Archéologique*,' 1847—"Du Personnage de la Mort"—has traced this influence in a very learned manner. He notices that, after the Babylonian captivity the Angel of Death

* Petron. Satyric., c. 34.

was confounded with the Spirit of Evil, or considered as his agent; and he now received the name of Samael, a word formed of the conjunction of two Hebrew words, *poison* and *God*; the name therefore literally signifying *God's poison*. Another name applied to him was *Douma*, or *silence*, from his silently recording in the book of fate the names of these persons whom he struck; as well as from the eternal silence of all who felt his blow. He was even confounded with Satan and Abaddon, and the names promiscuously applied. Death and Hell are in the same way conjoined in the Revelations; and our own poet Milton has acknowledged the relationship; Death being by him described as the offspring of Satan and Sin. Mons. Maury cites Jechiel Mile to prove that he was occasionally described as armed with a sword, a bow and arrows; and he considers that the address of St. Paul—"Oh, Death, where is thy sting" may have some allusion to the dart with which he may have been described as armed in some old allegory. The ancient Christians frequently personified Thanatos and Hades—Death and Hell—as two princes who reigned conjointly with Satan. The old apocryphal gospels abound in such allusions; and certain early Christian inscriptions give the epithet of *impious* to Death, the same as to Satan and to Hell.*

* See Aringhi, *Roma Subterranea*, vol. i, p. 204.

Death thus presented to the people of antiquity the image of inflexible destiny, and was called in turn *Ανάγκη*, *Αἴσα*, *Εἰρημαμένη*, *Πεπρωμένη* by the Greeks ; and *Fors*, *Fortuna*, *Fatum*, *Necessitas*, by the Latins ; *Nortia* by the Etruscans ; and by the people of Syria *Gad*, a name also applied to the planet Jupiter. He was also considered as the father of the *Parcæ* or Fates, who became the personification of human destiny. Their name *Μοῖρα* was converted into *Morta*, *Morsa* by the ancient Italians, and appears as *Muira* on an Etruscan mirror in the *Museo Chiusino*, pl. 108. It is the origin of the Latin *Mors*. The executive emissaries of the *Parcæ* were sanguinary beings, termed *Keres*, who were represented by their artists and poets as winged females of hideous visage, with prominent sharp teeth and crooked claws, with wings also on the head and feet ; the colour of their skin was black or blue ; and their retracted nails typified the cessation of life. They were the representatives of Death in Etruscan mythology.

Thanatos was a more fearful being, who embodied the entire power of these earlier imaginings. He figures in the monuments of antiquity, and, Pausanias says, had a statue at Sparta. In the cist upon which the Argonauts are represented in Kircher, he seizes the arms of the expiring heroes, and preparing to fly with them, his dark wings and equally gloomy visage are as repulsive as his mission ; he bears a sword with

which to sever a lock from the head of his victims, and thus consecrate them to the infernal deities.

Douce, in his dissertation on the Dance of Death, has noticed the symbols generally in use among the ancients to typify the conclusion of mortal existence; the soul being symbolised by a butterfly: and he notices that, in p. 7 of Spon's '*Miscellanea Eruditæ Antiquitatis*,' a prostrate corpse is seen, and over it a butterfly that has just escaped from the mouth of the deceased. The above excellent antiquary has added the following very curious sepulchral inscription that was found in Spain:—*HÆRIDIBVS MEIS MANDO ETIAM CINERE VT MEO VOLITET EBRIVS PAPILIO OSSA IPSA TEGANT MEA, &c.* On an ancient gem likewise in Ficoroni's '*Gemmæ Antiquæ Litteratæ*,' Tab. viii, No. 1, a human skull typifies mortality, and a butterfly immortality.

A remarkable personification of Death is to be found in the *Alcestis* of Euripides, in which Death is introduced as one of the characters of the drama, but under what form this character was represented in the performance the play itself affords no information, neither is his individuality or office very strictly defined; but it seems to be rather that of conductor of the souls of the dead to the infernal regions, than the terminator of life. Commentators upon this author do not appear to be certain whether the descriptive expression applied to Death in this play should be

“black-robed” or “black-winged.”* It is evident that at this time Death was personified as a real being; but his office or his appearance had not been so strictly defined as to prevent the fancy of an author from exerting itself, and confining him to a strict conventional form. Allegories of Death appear upon the remains of ancient Greek or Roman art; the emblem of Death was not that of Death the destroyer, but simply that of the cessation of life in the human body; and it was usually typified under the form of a youthful winged Genius leaning on a reversed funeral torch, in an attitude of repose, or sometimes bearing a funeral vase on his shoulder. With them Death was an eternal sleep, and was so described and pictured.

The people of antiquity associated dancing with their other funeral ceremonies; and their poets spoke of the revelry of the departed in Elysium who there continued their interrupted pleasures:—

“Pars pedibus plaudunt choreas et carmina dicunt.”†

Douce has noticed the discovery in the year 1810 of several fragments of sculptured sarcophagi near Cuma, on one of which was represented three dancing skeletons;‡ so that, as he observes, a sort of Death’s

* The reader who may desire to see what is said on the propriety of each epithet, is referred to Euripides, *Opera*, tom. iii, p. 539; Glasgow, 1821.

† Virgil, *Æneid.*, lib. vi.

‡ See, ‘*Sur la Danse des Squelettes de Cuma*,’ by M. Peignot.

Dance was not unknown to the ancients, "indicating, as it is ingeniously supposed, that the passage from death to another state of existence has nothing in it that is sorrowful, or capable of exciting fear." He also notices, that at a meeting of the Archæological Society at Rome, in 1831, a Roman lamp was exhibited, "on which were three dancing skeletons, and such are said to occur in one of the paintings at Pompeii."

Monsieur Hippolyte Fortoul, in a preliminary essay to the Paris edition of Schlotthauer's engravings of the 'Dance of Death,' says, that the Etruscans having thus "furnished the first idea of the Dance of Death," it was reserved for the early Christians to enlarge upon it. The ancient Christian church celebrated its mysteries in the catacombs of Rome, among the bodies of the early martyrs, and death was thus constantly before them, but was in their eyes no horrible thing, but a cessation from persecution, and a passport to celestial joy. The many inscriptions remaining, prove that it was with no gloomy feeling that death was contemplated by these ancient professors of our faith; it must have been a daily or hourly reflection with them, but one full of hope and happiness. The words, "in pace," so constantly a part of their mortuary inscriptions, give a complete key to the general feeling which governed their composition.* The bird with the olive-branch, the phoenix,

* See Aringhi's *Roma Subterranea*; or the Church in the Catacombs, by C. Maitland, M.D.

and such emblems, are all indicative of the same belief; and give a higher tone to emblematic configuration. With all this there was still mixed much of the old Pagan symbolism; and, in the earlier days of the church, it became necessary to ingraft religious belief upon old ideas or old customs, to a considerable extent, allowing the popular Floralia and Saturnalia to be practised, with other names, and other imputed motives than they had originally borne. Thus the religious dances of the Pagans could not be altogether abolished in the early Christian church, notwithstanding the interdiction of councils. Canciani mentions an ancient bequest of money for a dance in honour of the Virgin.

The custom of assembling in churchyards for the purpose of dancing, was continued until the ingenuity of the monkish legend-makers fabricated a story of divine vengeance, which they reported had fallen on some who had indulged in this profanation. In the ‘Manuel de Péche,’ usually ascribed to Bishop Grostete (and which was translated about the year 1390, by Robert Mannyng, commonly called Robert de Brunne, a Gilbertine canon), a story is told of a party of young male and female dancers, who

“Yn Ingland as y undyrstonde,
Yn a kynges tyme that hyght Edward,”

met in the churchyard of Cowek (Cowick, in Yorkshire?) to sing and dance round the church,* which they con-

* A trace of this custom may be found in the old Warwickshire

tinued to do, although mass was performing, paying no attention to the priest, who begged of them to desist, and who, vexed at the interruption made by them, prayed that they might not cease dancing for a twelve-month. This prayer takes effect; and, his own daughter, who had been inveigled from home to join in the dance, participates in the curse. He sends his son to remove her from the rest; but, as he pulls her by the arm, it separates from the body, and bears no more sign of life than a dead branch of a tree would do. They endeavour to bury the limb, but it is always cast forth from the grave. Meantime, the entire party continue dancing, and the emperor, who travels from Rome to witness the sight, endeavours to inclose the unfortunate dancers in a building, but it is always destroyed as fast as it is set up, and the expiration of the twelvemonth only ends the ghastly merriment; when they cease dancing, and run into the church, where for three days they lie in a swoon, before the altar, and only recover to wander as outcasts and examples of divine judgment through the world.

This story was popularly known upon the Continent, particularly in France and Germany, and is told in the *Nuremburg Chronicle* as having happened to eighteen men and women who had assembled in the

usage of *clipping the church at Easter*, as described in Hone's *Every-Day Book*, vol. i. The charity children standing with their backs to the church held each other by the hand, and were joined by their companions until the chain surrounded the edifice.

churchyard of St. Magnus, in the diocese of Magdeburg, on a Christmas eve during the reign of the Emperor Henry II.

Religious dances under the sanction of the church were anciently practised at Easter, and an account of one used in the diocese of Besançon is given in the *Mercure de France* of 1742, and in M. Fortoul's introduction to the Dance of Death already alluded to. He says this dance was named *the Bergeretta*, from the pastoral music with which it was accompanied; and it was thus regulated by the statutes of the church:—
 “Finito prandio, post sermonem, finita nona, fiunt choreæ in claustro, vel in medio navis ecclesiæ, si tempus fuerit pluviosum, cantando aliqua carmina, ut in processionariis continetur. Finita chorea . . . fit collatio in capitulo cum vino rubeo, et claro et pomis vulgo nominatis *des carpendus*.” Another statute thus speaks of the songs:—“Post nonam vadit chorus in prato claustrum, et ibi cantantur cancelinæ de resurrectione Domini.” The following are a few of the words, with the notes above them to which they were sung, as given by M. Fortoul:—

“*Si si la sol la ut ut ut ut si la si*
 Fidelium sonet vox sobria;
Si si la sol la ut ut ut ut si la si
 Convertere Sion in gaudia.
Si si la sol la ut ut ut si la si
 Sit omnium una lætitia,
Ut re re sol la ut ut, si la sol fa sol.
 Quos unica redemit gratia.”

In this verse, as M. Fortoul observes, the melody indicates that it was designed to be sung while dancing. The councils of Vienna and Basle having again prohibited these dances in the fourteenth century, the church of Besançon devised a way to obey without renouncing its old custom. After noonday prayers the collegiate chapter went to the cloisters, and there all the dignitaries, holding each other by the cape, turned three times around the green, after which they partook of a collation. This custom was continued until the year 1737.

The representation of Death as a putrescent body, or an entire skeleton, had before this time become common ; but this investiture of Death with all that is horrible and disgusting really belongs to a comparatively modern period. It did not enter into the design of ancient mythology, nor did the early Christians thus surround it with offensive horror. It was probably toward the close of the ninth century when these ideas became rife and assumed a tangible form ; but the rarity of works of art executed at so early a period will not enable us to do more than offer this as a conjecture. The completion of a thousand years of the Christian era was believed to be the limits of the world's duration, and a gloomy devotion seized all men's minds about the period when that cycle approached its completion ; churches were built, religious establishments endowed, and universal preparations

made for the conclusion of the world. Death seemed literally to stare all men in the face, and approach them with daily strides, extinguishing all earthly power and felicity. The dreaded time passed over, but it was long before men's minds recovered their tone; and Death, as a horrible reality to which all men must succumb, was visibly represented in a repulsive form.

The institutions of monastic life which became popular about this time, and which taught the utmost austerity and total separation from the world, must have strengthened this feeling. The instability of worldly grandeur, and the levelling of all things by Death, was commented on in a manner best suited to wean the listener from the world to the cell of the anchorite. The gloomy view of the world taken by such devotees gave rise to many a harrowing legend; and in the thirteenth century appeared one of the most famous and widely-spread of them all—“*Le dit des trois morts et des trois vifs.*” Of this story, so extremely popular in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, there are several versions, varying in length. It is a tale of much simplicity, and may be briefly told. Three noble youths hunting in a forest encounter three hideous spectres, in the form of half-decayed corpses (the now popularly received images of Death), who each give them a mournful lesson of the instability of worldly riches or pleasures, and the hollowness of earthly grandeur. In the Arundel MS., No. 83, is

a brief version of this popular legend, with a curious illumination showing the figures of three kings, one of whom carries a falcon, opposite to whom are three skeletons, these lines being placed above each :—

Over the Kings.

Ich am afert,
Lo whet ich se,
Me thinketh hit beth develes
thre.

Over the Skeletons.

Ich wes wel fair,
Such scheltou be ;
For Godes love, be wer by
me.

These few lines give the *morale* of the entire legend ; the tendency of which is to reflect on the vanity of earthly things. The dialogue is then continued in French verse as follows :—

DE VIVIS REGIBUS.

Primus Rex Vivus.

Compaynouns, veez ceo ke jeo
voy,
A poy ke jeo ne me devoy !
De grant pour le quoyer me
tremble.
Veez là tries mors ensemble,
Cum il sunt hidous et divers,
Purriz et mangez des vers.

Secundus Rex vivus.

Le secunde dist, Jeo ay envie,
Compaynoun, de amender ma
vie.
Trop ay fet de mes voluntez,
Et mon quoyer est entalentez,
De fere tant ke m'alme accorde,
A Dieu, rei de misericorde.

DE MORTUIS REGIBUS.

Primus Rex Mortuus.

Ly premer mort dist, Da-
moysel,
Ne ubliez pas, par sel oysel,
Ne pur vos robes á orfreis,
Qe vous ne tiegnez bien les
leys,
Qe Jhesu Crist ad ordinè,
De sa seinte voluntè.

Secundus Rex mortuus.

Seignours, dist le secund mort,
Verité est ke la mort.
Nais ad fel tiels cum nous
sumus,
Et vous puritez come nous
sumus,
Tut seez jà si pur ne si fin.

Tertius Rex vivus.

Ly tierz vif, ki destrient ses
miens,

Dist, Perquei fut fet homme
humeins ?

Pur ky deit receiveere tiele
perte ?

Ceo fust folie trop aperte.

Ceste folie ne fist unkes Dieux,

Si courte joye et si graitnz de-
duitz.

Tertius mortuus.

Le tierz mort dist, Sachez,
Jeo fu de mon lynage chief,
Princes, reys, et conustables,
Beals et riches, joyaux mes
tables ;

Ore su si hidous et si nuz,
Ke moy ver ne deigne nuls.

There is considerable variety in the character of the personages who are represented listening to these dead. In some instances noble ladies take the place of the three kings ; and in others a king, queen, and nobleman, or three young gentlemen, are the characters who listen to their admonitions. It is also sometimes treated as the vision of St. Macarius, a solitary Egyptian ancho-rite, who is frequently represented as taking a part in the morality, by enforcing the precepts of the dead kings, and pointing to three dead men in open coffins who lie at his feet. This popular fable was embodied by Andrea Orcagna in his great work, *the Triumph of Death*, which he painted in the fourteenth century on the walls of the Campo Santo at Pisa. This composition is one of great poetic power ; Death is not a fleshless skeleton, but a female armed with claws, with bat's wings,* who, with a scythe, which seems to descend on

* This calls to mind the Keres of antiquity, see p. 5, and may have been suggested to the painter by some antique delineation.

earth with an irresistible sweep, mows down popes, kings, queens, clergy, and all great dignitaries, in one unceremonious mass. Regardless of all cries for mercy from the multitude, Death strides towards a charming retreat, an arbour covered with flowers, and shadowed by groves of orange trees, typical of worldly pleasure, in which sit the gay and joyous denizens of the place, bearing in their hands beautiful birds, dancing to the sounds of music, or indulging in amorous dalliance with bright-eyed damsels. In front of this picture of the pleasures of the world, the artist has delineated a high mountain which is inhabited by hermits, who contrast their austerities with the indulgences of the worldlings opposite. At the foot of this mountain, Saint Macarius (one of the first solitaries of Christian Egypt, and one of the founders of the ascetic theology, which was revived at the close of the thirteenth century by the disciples of St. Francis) arrests the attention of three kings who have just returned from the chase in company with their mistresses; and directs their notice to three sepulchres, in which lie the bodies of three kings, one of which is in the last stage of putrefaction, another is being eaten by worms, and a third is reduced to a skeleton. The horror of the living kings at this rencontre is visible in their faces, and one holds his nose unable to conceal his disgust. Some of the other spectators appear indifferent, but one lady royally attired has a countenance full of the expression of sorrow.

This picture, like the more modern Dances of Death, was not designed merely as a morality, but also as a satire. Vasari and Morona declare the figures in the picture to be portraits, and give the names of the persons thus delineated. The picture was also crowded with inscriptions, which applied to the principal characters; and, from one which has been preserved, it appears that they were addressed to them by Death itself.

It will thus be seen, that Orcagna has enlarged upon the old legion of St. Macaire, which is incorporated in his work.

At an early period, this story of 'Les trois Morts et les trois Vifs' was popular in our own country, and was delineated with other scriptural subjects on the walls of our churches. An exceedingly curious instance was discovered in 1846, in the church of Battle, Sussex.* In the wall above the chancel arch, between the tie-beam and the roof, was painted this legend. The king post divided the subject; on one side of which appeared the figures of a king and queen, and traces of a third figure, which was seated, for the convenience of the designer, who had to fit his composition to the pointed arch of the roof. On the opposite side, stood two skeletons, partially draped, and indications of a seated figure of the same kind, opposing that on the other side. The king held a sceptre in his left hand,

* The church of Battle, dedicated to St. Martin, was founded by Ralph, abbot of the adjoining abbey of Battle, *circa* 1107-24.

and with his right, seemed to be pointing to, or holding on his crown. The queen, a graceful figure, turns towards the skeletons, who appear to be holding discourse with them. Above the whole was the moral epitaph of Lucan, "*Mors sceptrā ligonibus equat*"—Death levels sceptres with mattocks. This, with many other scriptural and religious subjects, were painted on the walls, in outline, with red ochre, and flat tints of yellow and red; a process very common in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. To the early part of the latter period these paintings probably belong.*

The earliest notice of a picture representing a series of figures, in a sort of dancing procession, and bearing the name of the "*Danse Macabre*," occurs in an account of one painted round the walls of the Cemetery of the Innocents of Paris, in the early part of the fifteenth century, but which has occasioned some misapprehension. It is thus narrated by M. Fortoul:

"At the commencement of the year 1408, the Duc de Berry, who for nearly thirty years had enriched himself by pillaging the provinces confided to his care by the unhappy Charles VI, thought, as he was getting old, of preparing a sepulchre worthy a person of his

* See a Paper by J. G. Waller, Esq., descriptive of these and other early mural paintings, in the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, vol. ii. It is much to be regretted that this painting, the most ancient representation of this subject (irrespective of book illuminations) on record, should have been destroyed.

wealth. Consequently he embellished the Church of the Innocents, where he wished his body to be placed. He caused to be represented in relief on the south gate the legend of St. Macaire, that half a century before had been painted by Andrea Orcagna and others, but which France now claimed as its own invention. On one side of the gate three dead persons were represented standing in a forest; on the other three living princes were going to the chase. Under the figures were, engraved on the stone, verses in French, containing the words which they appear to interchange. Six years afterwards the Duc de Berry, having altered his determination as regarded his place of interment, erected at Bourges a rich chapel, where he was buried; but the sculpture which he had caused to be executed at the Cemetery of the Innocents, being continually before the eyes of the people, must have produced a strong impression on their imagination.

“In the Journal of the reigns of Charles VI and VII, we read:—‘Item, l’an 1424, fut faite la Danse Maratre (pour *Macabre*) aux Innocents, et fut commencée environ le moys d’Aoust, et achevée au Karesme suivant.’ These words have given rise to very different interpretations. Villaret, in his ‘History of France,’ M. de Barante, in the ‘History of the Dukes of Burgundy,’ M. Villeneuve de Bargemont, in his ‘History of René d’Anjou,’ take upon themselves to relate, from the interpretation they have placed on this

laconic testimony, that in this year, 1424, the Duke of Bedford and the Duc Philippe le Bon meeting in Paris, got up an extraordinary spectacle, in which Death was made to appear, dressed in royal robes, and followed by many persons representing various grades of human life. They proceeded to the Cemetery of the Innocents, and from thence into the streets of the city. M. Peignot* remarks, not without reason, that a like procession could not last from the month of August to the following Lent; besides, we find in the same Journal, in the year 1429, that ‘Le Cordelier Richart, préchant aux Innocents, estoit monté sur un hault échaffault qui estoit prés de toise et demi de hault, le dos tourné vers les charniers, en contre la charronnerie, à l’endroit de la Danse Macabre.’” He concludes from this that this dance had not been represented by living persons, but only painted on the walls of the cemetery. An opinion in which Douce coincides.

“But,” continues Mr. Douce, “although M. Peignot may have triumphantly demonstrated that this subject was not exhibited by living persons at the above place and period, it by no means follows that it was not so represented at some other time and on some other spot.” The correspondent of the *Mercure de France* of 1742 supplied the fact which he quotes in proof of this from the archives of the Cathedral of Besançon. The

* Recherches sur les Danses des Morts. Dijon et Paris, 1826.

entry runs thus :—" Sexcallus (seneschallus) solvat D. Joani Coleti matriculario S. Joannis quatuor simasias vini per dictum matricularium exhibitas illis qui choream machabæorum fecerunt 10 Julii (1453) nuper lapsa hora missæ in ecclesia S. Joannis evangelistæ propter capitulum provinciale Fratrum Minorum." From which it appears that the Friars Minors of this place gave the reward of four measures of wine to those who executed at their orders this dance *Machabée*, which was the corrupt country mode of rendering the word *Macabre*. It was this important entry which induced Carpentier, in his supplement to the Glossary of Ducange, to give this definition to the *Danse Macabre* :—" MACHABÆORUM chorea, vulgo Dance (*sic*) Macabre ludicra quædam ceremonia ab ecclesiasticis pie instituta qua omnium dignitatum, tam ecclesiæ quam imperii, personæ choream simul ducendo, alternis vicibus a chorea evanescebant, ut mortem ab omnibus suo ordine oppetendam esse significarent."

The name of "La Danse Macabre" has afforded as much scope for critical debate as nearly all the other points connected with this curious subject have done, and will continue to do. Popular customs, or popular phases of the mind, are of too commonplace and ordinary a description, when they are in frequent use, to meet with proper narrators. They become part of traditional history ; and, like all such history, present facts mingled with fancy, or dictated by error. The

word *Macabre*, has exercised a great deal of critical ingenuity to ascertain its real meaning or its true derivation. That it was used to designate this peculiar dance, at a very early period, we have proof. Douce says, "it has been disguised under the several names of *Macabre*,* *Maccabees*,† *Maratre*,‡ and even *Macrobius*."§ While some writers apply the term to a living person, like Lydgate's 'Machabree the Doctoure,' and speak of him as a German poet, named *Macaber*; who, consequently, was placed by the learned *Fabricius* among their number. Douce, in his excellent dissertation, has, however, clearly shown that the name does not at all apply to any poet or painter connected with the description or delineation of this dance, and he inclines to consider the name as derived from the anchorite *St. Macarius*, who is connected with the ancient and more simple "dit des trois morts et des trois vifs." He says,—“The word *Macabre* is found only in French authorities, and the saint's name, which in the modern orthography of that language, is *Macaire*, would, in many ancient manuscripts, be written *Macabre*, instead of *Macaure*, the letter *b* being substituted for that of *u*, from the caprice, ignorance, or carelessness of transcribers.” If the first, or *down-stroke* of the letter *u*

* *Passim*.

† Modern edition of the *Danse Macabre*.

‡ *Journal de Charles VII.* (See p. 19.)

§ *Lansdown MS. No. 397-20.*

was elevated, as it is not uncommon to see it in old MSS., the resemblance to a *b* would be still greater.

It must not, however, be concealed, that some French antiquaries have considered the word to be derived from the Arabic *Macabra*, signifying *cemetery*; this was the opinion of M. Van Praet, the keeper of the Royal Library at Paris, as noticed by Douce, and which has been since enforced by M. A. de Longperier.* Douce did not incline to put much faith in this derivation, because “personified sculpture, as well as the moral nature of the subject, cannot belong to the Mahometan religion.” Yet the name, “the Dance of the Cemetery,” has been pronounced since the time of Douce, “as far more satisfactory than that which derives it from St. Macarius.” The reader has his choice of derivations, neither of which can be authoritatively proved.

The popularity of this painted morality during the middle ages was very great. The oldest on record is that of Minden, in Westphalia, which, on the authority of Fabricius,† was dated 1383, but this statement is not accompanied with any authority, and is open to doubt; in fact, M. Fortoul observes, all paintings of the ‘Dance of Death,’ to which a *certain* date can be assigned, are posterior to the representation in the cemetery at Paris, from whence he draws the conclu-

* *Revue Archæologique*, 1845, p. 248.

† *Bibliotheca Latina Mediæ et Infimæ Ætatis*.

sion, that the legend and the dance are both peculiarly French in their origin. It is not easy precisely to determine the date of the other paintings of this subject, of which traces have been discovered in France; but over the gate of the church of Briey, near Metz, the legend of "the three dead and the three living" was sculptured at a period certainly anterior to the 'Danse Macabre,' at the Innocents. It is, however, proved on documentary evidence, that this subject was painted on the walls of the cloister of the Sainte Chapelle at Dijon, by an artist named Masoncelle, in 1406, five years before the celebrated one at Basle. A cloister contiguous to the cathedral of Amiens, destroyed in 1817, bore the name of *Macabée*, which was probably derived from a painting of the kind, fragments of which were seen by M. Maurice Rivoire. That late distinguished antiquary and artist, M. Langlois of Rouen, has preserved memorials of a similar painting which decorated the cloisters of St. Maclou at Rouen. On the pillars of the church of Fécamp in Normandy the same subject is sculptured. In the celebrated abbey of the Chaise Dieu, in Auvergne, a fresco has been recently discovered,* bearing a great resemblance to that at Lubeck, to be hereafter noticed. It appears to have been executed about the middle of the fifteenth century, and represents the various characters hand in hand in

* It has been copied and published by M. V. Sansonnetti, with descriptions by M. Achille Jubinal. Paris, 1841.

a circle, in the manner of the most ancient pictures. At Lezardrieuz, in Brittany, the stalls of the choir are sculptured with groups of personages, who, although apparently giving themselves up to the pleasures of life, yet hold in their hands "têtes de mort," allusive to its brevity. An idea evidently obtained from the old Dance of Death, modified by the taste of the period of the *Renaissance*, and of which we possess many instances in this country. Cupids or genii mourning over skulls, which originated at this time, have not yet ceased to appear on tombstones as the types of mortality.

The walls of the court of the Chateau of Blois are also said to have been similarly decorated; and in the cabinet d'estampes at Paris is a magnificent volume, composed of eight large leaves of vellum, on which are richly illuminated figures of the *Danse Macabre*, accompanied by a gothic text. Upon the cover of this volume is written in a modern hand: "Danse Macabre, ou l'empire de la mort sur tous les états de la vie humaine, peinte contre le mur de la cour du château de Blois, vers 1502, temps où Louis XII, roi de France, fit embellir ce lieu, occupé avant ce prince par les seigneurs de la maison de Champagne, ceux de la maison de Châtillon, comtes de Blois et par celle d'Orléans." This book, which has exercised the erudition of M. Van Praet, M. Peignot, and M. Leber, contains nothing not published in the 'Danse Macabre,' printed at the close of

the fourteenth century by Guyot Marchand. M. Fortoul asks—did Louis XII reproduce on the walls of his chateau the pictures and verses of this book? or is it certain that he thus decorated his walls at all? The assertion he declares to rest on a very fragile foundation; as he has discovered on the reverse of one of the leaves, this inscription in Gothic characters:—

**“Les histopres et libres en francoys. Pu^{cto}. 2^o
contre la muraille de derriere la court Bloys.”**

He concludes therefore, that this note had inspired the author of the more recent subscription on the cover with the idea of so describing the pictures; which certainly would be very inappropriate decorations for the court of a palace; and that this passage, instead of indicating that they are the resemblances of anything painted on the walls, merely points out the place where this book was to be placed in the library of Blois.

The most celebrated of the continental paintings devoted to this subject was the one at Basle, which is said to have been painted at the instance of the prelates who assisted at the grand council there, which lasted from 1431 to 1443, and in allusion to a plague that happened during its continuance. It was painted on the walls of the cemetery of the Dominican convent, and M. Peignot has remarked that it was common for that religious fraternity thus to decorate their cloisters. The old legend of “Les Trois Morts,” &c. was not

incorporated with it, but the portraits of the Pope, Felix V and the Emperor Sigismund, by whom this council was convoked, appeared among the other personages; the latter died before the commencement of this plague, but his successor, as king of the Romans, Albert II, is also said to have been represented. After enduring for about 120 years, it was falling rapidly to decay, when a painter of Basle, named Hans Hugo Klauber, repainted the old fresco with oil colour, adding at the commencement of the painting a portrait of the reformer Oecolampadius, as if preaching on death to all grades therein represented; and at the end of it portraits of himself, his wife, and his child. He probably introduced other alterations, particularly in the inscriptions, which savoured strongly of the reformed religion, and which certainly were not so old as the original picture. Thus the Pope was made to declare of himself that his power did not come from God, and that he enriched himself by the sale of pardons. An inscription in Latin was added, noting this restoration in 1568. At the conclusion of the inscription two Greek lines were appended, in which, by a double *jeu de mots*, allusion was made to the name Macabre:—

“ΟΡΑΤΕΛΟΣ ΜΑΚΡΟΥ ΒΙΟΥ
ΑΡΧΗΝ ΟΡΑΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΥ.”

This painting was retouched in 1616, and in 1621 was copied, engraved, and published by Matthew

Merian.* It has been absurdly ascribed to Holbein ; but as he was not born until a century after the time when we know it to have been painted, of course that assertion is wrong. This picture was again repainted in 1703 ; but had become so injured by time and the ill usage it had undergone by the ropemakers who worked in this cloister, that the magistrates of Basle ordered its demolition in 1805.

On the opposite bank of the Rhine, in Little Basle, at a nunnery named Klingenthal, was an old cloister, the walls of which were painted with a similar subject ; this was copied by Emanuel Ruchel in 1766, and the copy is preserved in the library of Basle. It was said to have been dated 1312 ; but these early dates are always suspicious, as in the old Arabic numerals the 5 is often mistaken for 3, which has been a prolific source of ante-dating in our own country ;† this one appears, however, to have been expressed partly by words as well as figures, thus : “ Dussent jor trihundert und xii.” But these words may have been painted

* Douce says, “ There are great doubts as to their first appearance in 1621, as mentioned by Fuessli and Heineken ; but editions are known to exist with the respective dates of 1649, 1696, 1698, 1725, 1744, 1756, and 1789.” Merian, in his Preface, states, however, that he had copied the originals some years before, which may have led to a mistake.

† Some exceedingly curious instances are given by Mr. T. Wright, in a paper on the “ Antiquity of Dates expressed in Arabic Numerals,” in the *Journal of the British Archæological Association*, vol. ii.

thus from an older date mistakingly read, at a period when such things were not so critically looked at as they are now. This painting was of very rude execution; and that, with its bad drawing, was considered as a proof of its being of greater antiquity than the previously-described painting at Basle. But M. Fortoul observes, with much truth, that the rudeness of the painting was more the consequence of the want of skill in the painter, than of its own antiquity. There were many paintings executed in Bavaria at the commencement of the sixteenth century, which are greatly inferior in artistic power to the works of the fourteenth century.

Nicholas Emanuel Deutsch (born in 1484, died 1530) painted in the cemetery of the Dominicans, in his native city of Berne, in Switzerland, a similar composition. In 1560, the cloisters, on the walls of which this picture was executed, were pulled down to widen a street, and the painting of course destroyed; it had, however, been copied in water-colours, and that copy kept in the library at Berne. A lithographic print was published in 1832, which gives the true character of the original work, an union of gothic art with the taste of the *Renaissance*. This work had some influence on that called Holbein's, as may be seen in one of the subjects—the Poor Man and Death.

At Lucerne, an artist named Meglinger painted on the bridge a series of small triangular panels of the

same subject, which from the costume may be safely dated in the seventeenth century.*

The Dance was painted at Strasburg, in Germany ; from the style of the figures, and the ornaments with which they are accompanied, it appears to have been executed at the commencement of the sixteenth century. That at Lubeck, said to have been dated 1383, and the authority for which rests on Fabricius's loose account, has been already noticed, and the same remarks may apply to it that have been applied to that at Klingenthal. Another was executed at Lubeck on the walls of the chapel for funerals ; at the entry of the church of Notre Dame, which is said to have been executed in 1463, retouched in 1588, again in 1642, and many times during the last century. It differs from others, inasmuch as the figures do not advance in pairs, but are in a perfect circle, thus showing a close affinity to the oldest of these designs.† The painting

* M. Girardin has happily characterised this Dance of Death in the *Journal des Débats*, 13 Feb., 1835.

† "Here you see the representation of Death leading an emperor in his imperial robes, who with his other hand takes hold of such another figure which leads up a king ; and so alternately a figure of Death and a human person through all conditions and stages of life."—Dr. Nugent's *Travels*. Death addresses a few lines to each character, who reply to him. The figures delineated are—the pope, emperor, empress, cardinal, king, bishop, general, abbé, knight, carthusian, burgomaster, prebendary, nobleman, physician, usurer, chaplain, steward, churchwarden, tradesman, recluse, peasant, young man, maiden, infant, dancing-master, and fencing-master.

in the church of St. Mary, at Berlin, mentioned by Douce,* on the authority of Misson, M. Fortoul says, has been sought for in vain. At Anneberg, in Saxony, it was painted in 1525; and sculptured at Dresden, on a part of the frieze of the palace of the Duke George, the enemy of Luther. At Vienna, a similar composition has been described by Bruckmann† in the convent of the Augustines.

Douce says: "The only specimen of it in Holland that has occurred on the present occasion is in the celebrated *Orange-Salle*, which constitutes the grand apartment of the country seat belonging to the Prince of Orange, in the wood adjacent to the Hague. In three of its compartments Death is represented by skeletons darting their arrows against a host of opponents."

The same learned writer has noticed the curious representation of Death as conqueror of all, sculptured in the church of St. Peter the Martyr, at Naples. That of the Campo Santa, at Pisa, has already been alluded to.

A curious procession, evidently originating from this *Triumph of Death*, has been noticed by Vasari. He says, that in 1512 an eccentric artist, named Piero di Cosimo, prepared for the carnival at Florence, in conjunction with some of the young nobility, a tri-

* Dissertation on the Dance of Death, p. 48.

† *Epistolæ Itinerariæ*, vol. v, Epist. 32.

umphant procession, in which Death was seated in a victor's car, surrounded by emblems of mortality, and attended by cavaliers dressed as for a funeral. The melancholy cortege traversed Florence by torch-light, stopping at various places, when skeletons and corpses burst from their tombs and sung —

“Morti siam, come vedete,
Così morti vedrem voi :
Fummo già come voi siete,
Voi sarete come voi.”

Douce notices the rarity of any notice of painted or sculptured representations of Death's Dance in Italy and Spain, and alludes to the probability of a painting on this subject once existing in the cathedral of Burgos, as the only thing of the kind in the latter country which has been recorded.

This lugubrious subject was a greater favorite in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries than many would now be inclined to imagine. A singular instance of this is afforded by the frontispiece to this volume, which represents a bedstead carved all over with emblems of mortality, and scenes from the Dance of Death. It was sketched from the original, exhibited in the Museum of Arts at Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1846, by Mr. F. W. Fairholt. The wood of which it was constructed was chesnut. The canopy was decorated in the centre with winged heads, on each side of which sat cherubs, leaning on skulls, and holding wreaths of

flowers. Down the posts were sculptured ornaments, inclosing skulls and cross-bones. Beneath the tester was an emblematical representation of the horrors of war; Mars in the centre brandished a sword amid falling stars and mundane commotions. The head-board was devoted to the story of William Tell. It was divided into two portions: the upper part showing the cruelties practised by Gesler and his soldiers, who were burning towns, boring out the eyes of the inhabitants, and dashing out the brains of women with axes; the lower portion was devoted to the exploits of Tell, who was represented, in one of the two subjects here delineated, shooting the apple on the head of his son, Gesler's hat appearing on a pole behind him; the other scene was his escape in the boat. On the side and foot of the bed was sculptured the Dance of Death, very similar to that delineated in the engravings of this volume. On one side appeared the doctor, soldier, miser, pope, cardinal, and lawyer, each led off by a figure of Death. On the other, an old woman, a carter, a husbandman, and a young lady and gentleman, are conducted by a series of the same grim personages, who all appear to have made themselves distasteful, except the skeleton who escorts the husbandman, and who is provided with a bagpipe. The arms in the centre of each side consist but of cross-bones, with a skull and hour-glass as a crest. Upon the foot-board Death is playing the guitar before an

empress, who seems charmed by his music. A similar figure is laying violent hands on an elector, while another, blowing his trumpet in triumph, is leading away an emperor, who drops his sceptre in horror. The fourth of the series of skeletons is raising himself by stepping on a stone, and thus deprives an armed monarch of his crown. A well-executed landscape adorns the background of this series. The entire carving is exceedingly well done, and appears to be a work of the middle of the sixteenth century.

In England the old legend of *Les Trois Morts et les Trois Vifs* was popular at a very early period, as we have noticed in the very curious old paintings in Battle church. The Dance of Death, in its enlarged form, was also exhibited in the cathedral of our metropolis. Sir Thomas More speaks of "the Daunce of Death pictured in Paules." Stow, in his 'Survey of London,' has given this history of it:—"John Carpenter, town clerk of London in the reign of Henry VI, caused, with great expense, to be curiously painted upon board, about the north cloister of Paul's, a monument of Death leading all estates, with the speeches of Death, and answer of every state. This cloister was pulled down 1549." In another part of this 'Survey,' Stow has again alluded to these very popular representations of the vanity of human life, enlarging his notice, and giving a more detailed account of these paintings. The cloister is said to have been on the north side of

St. Paul's, environing a piece of ground anciently called Pardon Churchyard. "About this cloyster was artificially and richly painted the Dance of Machabray, or Dance of Death, commonly called the Dance of Paul's: the like wherof was painted about St. Innocent's cloyster at Paris: the metres or poesie of this dance were translated out of French into English by John Lidgate, monke of Bury, and with the picture of Death leading all estates, painted about the cloyster, at the special request and at the dispence of Jenken Carpenter, in the reigne of Henry the Sixt." Lydgate's verses have been preserved at the end of Tottell's edition of his 'Fall of Princes,' 1554, and by Dugdale, in his 'History of St. Paul's.' The characters there exhibited, as may be collected from the titles to the verses, were the pope, emperor, cardinal, king, patriarch, constable, archbishop, baron, princess, bishop, squire, abbot, abbess, bailiff, astronomer, burgess, canon secular, merchant, Chartreux, serjeant, monk, usurer, physician, young lover, gentlewoman, man of law, Mr. John Rekyll, *tregetour* (or juggler to King Henry V), parson, juror, minstrel, labourer, friar minor, child, young clerk, hermit, the king eaten of worms, Machabree the doctor. The last character was probably the hermit Macarius, and the dead king a reminiscence of the old legend. The introduction of a well-known personage, Rekyll the *tregetour*, is curious, as it shows at how early a period it became usual to

introduce real characters into the dance. Death thus addresses him :

“ Maister John Rykell sometime tregitour
Of noble Henry kinge of Engelsonde,
And of France the mighty conqueror,
For all the sleightes and turning of thyne honde
Thou must come nere this dance to understonde;
Nought may avail all thy conclusions,
For Deth shortly, nether on see nor londe,
Is not dysceyved by noon illusions.”

To which he despondingly remarks :

“ *Lyppardemayne* now helpith me right nought
Farewell my craft and all such sapience,
For Deth hath more maistries than I have wrought.”

Mr. W. J. Thoms, in “ Some Observations upon the Danse Macabre,” published in the ‘Archæological Journal,’ vol. ii, has commented upon a passage in Chaucer’s ‘Knight’s Tale,’ descriptive of

“ The portreyture that was upon the wall,
Within the temple of mighty Mars the redde.”

The entire passage of Chaucer is too long for quotation here ; but Mr. Thoms observes, “ I think there are few of my readers who have made the Dance of Death the subject of their attention, however cursorily, who will not remember how frequently the pick-purse, the cook, ‘ the carter over-ridden with his cart,’ &c., figure in that remarkable pageant-like work of art ; who will not see, that in describing the paint-

ings which decorated the temple of Mars, Chaucer drew not merely from Statius or Boccacio, but also from his memory of some Dance of Death which, he well knew, would be recognised by his readers." That it was very early known in this country we have abundant proof.

On the walls of the Hungerford chapel in Salisbury cathedral was a painting, executed about 1460, representing Death holding conversation with a young gallant attired in the most fashionable costume of the day. He exclaims :

" Alasse, Dethe, alasse, a blessing thing yo were
Yf thou woldyst spare us in our lustynesse,
And cum to wretches yt bethe of hevye chere,
When they ye clepe to slake there dystresse.
But owte, alasse ! thyne owne sely selfwyldnesse
Crewelly werieth them yt seyge, wayle, and wepe,
To close there yen yt after ye doth clepe."*

To this Death gloomily replies :

" Grasles galante, in all thy luste and pryde
Remembyr, yt thou ones schalte dye ;
Deth shold fro thy body thy sowle devyde,
Thou mayst him not ascape certaynly.
To ye dede bodys cast doune thyne ye,
Behold thaym well, consyder and see,
For such as they are, such shalt you be."†

* Douce's version of the last two lines of this speech are so corrupt as to totally obscure their sense.

† This curious painting is engraved in Gough's 'Sepulchral Monuments.' The concluding line still survives in the old country epitaph.

This subject was the remains of a Macabre Dance, for portions of another compartment appeared beside it. Douce has noticed other representations as existing at Hexham, in Northumberland, "executed," says Mr. Thoms, "apparently about the time of Henry VII.;" in the chapel of Wortley Hall, Gloucestershire; on the walls of the archiepiscopal palace at Croydon; and on the walls of the church at Stratford-on-Avon: and Shakspeare's remembrance of them may have suggested the passage concerning "Death's fool," in the immortal poet's 'Measure for Measure,' act iii, sc. 1, aided, as it may have been, by the woodcuts of the same subjects which form the present volume, and the seventh of which may (as conjectured by Douce and Mr. Charles Knight) have furnished Shakspeare with the noble lines in 'Richard II,' act iii, sc. 2—

" within the hollow crown,
That rounds the mortal temples of a king,
Keeps death his court; and there the antick sits,
Scoffing his state and grinning at his pomp;
Allowing him a breath, a little scene
To monarchize, be fear'd, and kill with looks;
Infusing him with self and vain conceit,—
As if this flesh, which walls about our life,
Were brass impregnable,—and humour'd thus,
Comes at the last, and with a little pin
Bores through his castle-wall, and—farewell king!"

In an inventory of the property of Henry VIII,* made out in the reign of his successor, a piece of

* Harleian MS. No. 1419.

tapestry, on which "the Dance of Maccabre" was pourtrayed, is noticed as being in the Tower of London. M. Peignot has described a similar subject, embroidered in white upon black stuff, which belonged to the Notre Dame at Dijon, and was hung above the stalls when grand funeral ceremonies took place there.

There are a series of wooden carvings of this curious subject still existing in this country, which have singularly enough escaped the notice of Douce and other antiquaries who have written upon it. They are in the church of St. Michael, at Coventry, and form the decorations of the *misereres* or carved stalls there. The entire series are extremely curious, and comprise groups of figures of various grades led by Death to the grave; together with representations of the Last Judgment and the Final Doom.* They are boldly and beautifully carved, and are apparently the work of the latter half of the fifteenth century.† Death leads each one by the hand; and the pope is one of the characters included: they are arranged two and two, as pendants to the central subjects; Death and each

* This subject has also been painted over the chancel arch of the same church, and is a work of the fifteenth century. It had been covered with whitewash at the Reformation; and upon its removal some few years since, reappeared but little injured, and with great judgment has been still preserved.

† Mr. Douce in correcting (?) one of his Reviewers (p. 239 of his Dissertation), declares that he is mistaken in saying "that the Dance of Death is found in carvings in wood in the choirs of churches. Not a single instance can be produced."

figure forming separate groups, as in the most ancient delineations.

In such a brief introductory notice of this popular subject as the present only claims to be, it will be impossible to notice all the forms under which it was presented to the eye in the "olden time." We must refer the curious reader to the pages of Douce for a descriptive list, which places his research and industry in the most favorable light, and say a few words on the series of woodcuts reproduced in this volume.

Before the publication of this series, however, a bookseller named Guy or Guyot Marchand, of Paris, gave to the world, in the year 1485, a series of engravings of the *Danse Macabre*.* A second edition was published in the following year, when, in addition to the old name, the printer tells us, "ce present livre est appelé *Miroèr salutaire*." M. Fortoul says that "the character of the engravings which accompany the publication of Guyot Marchand are for the time extremely remarkable. The figures do not form a circle like the painting at Lubeck, but are grouped two and two together. The treatment of the figures reminds us of the painted glass of the fourteenth century; but the heads have a more beautiful expression than might have been expected before Italian art had

* The only copy known of this edition is in the library at Grenoble; and is minutely described in Millin's *Magasin Encyclopédique*. 1811. Vol. vi, p. 355.

its influence on the minds of French artists." It consists of thirty pages, twenty-four being devoted to the *Danse Macabre* and six to the legend of the *Trois Morts*, &c. The success of this publication induced him to bring forward 'La Danse Macabre des Femmes' in the same year, and to continue publishing the same with variations, as new editions were called for.

In the reign of Francis I, a bookseller of Lyons determined to revive the publication of the *Danse Macabre*, which, at the close of the preceding century had been so fortunate to the Paris publisher; and he gave his work a title which sufficiently indicated the new spirit in which it was conceived: 'Les Simulachres et Historiées Faces de la Mort, autant élégamment pourtraictés que artificiellement imaginées.' The first edition was published at Lyons in 1538, the sixth in 1554, with some additional plates; and ours are facsimiles of this edition, and have been executed by Joseph Schlotthauer, (professor in the Academy of Fine Arts at Munich,) with the most scrupulous exactitude, upon stone; so that it becomes difficult to distinguish them from the original cuts.

To the original edition of these copies, published at Munich in 1832, was appended a very curious analysis and classification of the entire series by Professor H. F. Massmann, of which the following is a translation, omitting merely such brief notices of editions as have appeared above:

“Holbein’s Dance of Death, as presented in the following lithographic plates, are the copies of fifty-three woodcuts; the first four being devoted to the history of the beginning of the world—the Creation, the Temptation, the Fall, and the Curse. The fifth is the end of all—the Charnel-house, or Triumph of Death. The next forty-one plates (from pl. 6 to 47 inclusive) comprise what is generally called *the Dance of Death*, from the pope to the beggar. These are followed by four groups of children (pl. 48 to 51), having a double meaning; then comes the Last Judgment (pl. 52); and the series conclude with Death’s Coat of Arms, the supporters to which are portraits of Holbein and his wife.

“According to this arrangement, plates 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 52 separate themselves as particular scenes, as well as plate 53, the Arms of Death, which everybody must at the end adopt. This finishes the history of the serpent tempter; and leave forty-one plates to the series of Death’s Dance, and four groups of children, introduced in every edition since 1538, as allegorical of Conceit (pl. 49), Gluttony (pl. 50), Division of Booty (pl. 51), and the Cause of Suicide (pl. 48).

“The union of the entire fifty-three plates took place in the editions published in 1545, in the earlier part of which year an edition appeared with only forty-one plates, like the earliest one. The verses in the small French edition of 1538 were in 1545 translated into Latin by

George Æmilius, of Wittenberg, and at a later period into German, by Caspar Scheyt, of Worms.

“In a short time many other editions appeared. In 1542, when the second edition appeared, Jobst de Necker, of Augsburg, had copies taken in folio, and published them in 1544, but retained only forty-two of the subjects. In 1545 and 1546 copies came out in Venice by Vincenz Vaugris, with descriptions in Latin and Italian. In 1555 very good copies came out at Cologne, published by Birckmann, with woodcuts by S. A. (Silvius Antonius), of which a great many impressions were taken, and are still frequently to be met with. Others were published in 1588 and 1608, by Huldreich Frölich, of Basle, mixed with woodcuts of the Basle Dance of Death, which were afterwards reproduced in 1715 by Conrad Mechel. Others, in four parts, came out at St. Gall in 1581, with text from De Necker. Numberless copies engraved on copper appeared, by Eberhard Keiser (Frankfort, 1617-1623), by Conrad and Rudolph Meyer (Zurich, 1650, 1651-1657; Hamburg and Leipsic, 1759), by Redelius (Augsburg, 1704), by Michael Mentz (Lintz, 1753-1767, Vienna, 1765), by Joseph Vogel (Nuremburg, 1648), by Weichard Valvasor (Laybach, 1682), by Rusting (Amsterdam, 1707—Nuremburg, 1736), as well as others not noticed here.

“These many copies on wood and copper are proofs that, from the first, Holbein’s Dance of Death

was looked on not as a work of art alone, but one to convey popular instruction. The following is a slight explanation, as clear and in as few words as possible, of their moral meaning and proper order, which is obtained from a comparison of them in the various editions, as well as with the older paintings at Great and Little Basle and at Berne. The old editions are printed on one side of the paper, with the plates much mixed and varying in number, none of them having more than forty plates. The Astronomer (pl. 27) and the Warrior (pl. 40) were wanting in the editions of 1538, 1542, and 1545, and first appear in the second edition of 1545. Of the original proofs, which have descriptions in German above or below the plates, two copies only were known; one in the library at Basle, the other belonging to William Young Ottley, in England. To compare with these we now have a third specimen, belonging to President Nagler, of Berlin, in which a particular order is observed in placing the subjects; the ruling principle of which is, the separating of the spiritual from the worldly class of society; and that this is not the only example of such mode of arrangement is evident, from the already-named copies of the old paintings of Basle, by the famous engraver Jobst de Necker, of Augsburg, 1544, which exhibit that order. The same is seen in the Dresden Dance of Death of 1525; likewise in the Berne paintings by Nicolas Manuel, which come still nearer to Holbein's.

“ In Nagler’s original copy of the cuts just alluded to, everything is classed in meaning groups, according to office, rank, or age. After Death’s Coat of Arms and the four plates of the Creation, Temptation, Expulsion, and Fall of Man, comes the spiritual dance, from the pope, cardinal, bishop, abbot, canon, rector, and curate, to the monk and nun ; after which follows the dance of the worldlings in their proper order as to grade, each having his female partner, commencing with the emperor and empress, who are followed by the king and queen, duke and duchess, lord and lady, and nobleman and lady. After which appear those subjects devoted to society at large, the knight, the judge with advocates and counsellors ; the doctor, the rich man, merchant, sailor, pedlar, and farmer. The old man and old woman and the young child, emblematic of Death’s victory over all, which is again typified in the bone-house ; the series concluding with the Last Judgment, and man’s final triumph over Death.

“ This order is not to be found in the present edition, which faithfully copies the original, and in which we see a new and particular order. It is true that the worldly and the spiritual are mixed together in the dance ; and so is sex, rank, and age. The females are partly by themselves (pl. 10, 11), and partly in pairs with the males (pl. 14, 15, 23, 24), but are as often separated from their companions by the introduction

of others; thus plates 13 and 35 should go together, as also should 32 and 34, and 33 and 25. Then we find together the three female subjects (pl. 34, 35, 36), in which is delineated the bride preparing for the wedding, the new-married couple, and the wife. Old impressions give them the names of *Sponsa*, *Conjux*, and *Virgo*.

“ Until the present time, nobody has noticed that Holbein has twice taken the figure of Death from the Basle paintings, and in both instances they are exact copies. The first is in plate 11, where Death appears in the dress of a jester, with a bell-cap on. The second is in plate 35, where Death is beating the drum before the new-married couple, which is exactly the same as in the Basle painting, where Death is beating the drum at the hermit’s funeral; and which drum, in the French edition of these cuts by Frölich, 1588, has been very curiously turned into a skull. We could, however, make the supposition that this great resemblance between the two representations first arose at the renovation of the Basle painting in 1568 by Hans Hugo Klauber, who is said by many to have been a pupil of Holbein’s, and may have copied the cuts in the painting; but exactly the same figures are found in the Dance of Death of 1312* at Little Basle, which, it is well known, was copied from the painting at

* See what is said on the subject of this date in p. 28, which may in some degree affect the professor’s argument.

Great Basle, with the same number of figures, and in the same order and position. Therefore both these figures may have been created before 1568, and possibly before 1436.

“This conclusion gives us an insight of Holbein’s manner of proceeding. He did not leave either of the figures in their old places, but put the one with the cap of folly in the same plate as the vain queen, and the one with the drum before the duke and duchess, as their conductor to the bride-chamber.

“The three plates, the Gamblers, Drunkards, and Robber (pl. 41, 42, 44), which form an union of evil, were classed together, and first separated in 1545, through the introduction of the fool (pl. 43). In the present edition, although the worldly part of the community (pl. 7, 8, 13, 16, 31, 32) are parted from the spiritual, yet we find them all regularly placed as to grade. As leaders of society, both lay and spiritual, the precedence is given to the pope and emperor (pl. 6, 7) ; after these the king, either German or French, according to different editions for each country ; and then follow the rest, according to their rank in society. The cardinal, that he may not be separated too far from the holy chair of which he hopes some day to be possessor, is placed (pl. 9) before the empress and queen (pl. 10, 11), but who must not be far removed from their lords. After them appear, in pretty regular order, bishop (pl. 12), duke (pl. 13) abbot

and abbess (pl. 14, 15), nobleman (pl. 16), canon (pl. 17), judge (pl. 18), followed by two persons of equal rank, the advocate and councillor (pl. 19, 20), then come four clerical persons, all of the same grade, the curate rector, monk, and nun (pl. 21, 22, 23, 24). Next to the nun, who is too much occupied by an earthly love, comes the old woman (pl. 25) entirely thoughtful of the future. After these follow two who pretend to know and defy Death. The doctor (pl. 26) who practises earthly help, and would drive Death away if he could; and the astronomer (pl. 27) who hopes to learn from the study of the stars the vicissitudes of life and the hour of Death, and before whom Death unexpectedly holds his glass and skull. Then follow the servants of Mammon: — the miser (pl. 28) and the merchant (pl. 29) who obtain their object on land, as the sailor (pl. 30) does on the seas. Then come two of the nobility, the knight (pl. 31) and the count (pl. 32), the last of which is parted from his female companion by the old man (pl. 33). Other female subjects follow, and next to them the pedlar and farmer (pl. 37, 38), after which comes the child carried away by Death, which originally concluded the series, what follows being added in later editions.

“ Holbein, in the print of the king (pl. 8), has undoubtedly intended to represent Francis I of France, as may be seen by an examination of any acknowledged portrait of that sovereign. And it is worth

noticing, that in the Cologne edition of 1555, eight years after the death of Francis, the figure was altered into that of the successor to the throne, Henry II, and the emperor (pl. 9) made such an old man, that he appeared like Charles V, who, in 1555, retired into Spain, and who, at the age of 58, through anxiety and the trouble of ruling, appeared quite worn out. The Emperor Maximilian I, his predecessor, died at the age of 60, in 1519, and it will be seen that Holbein intended his picture for a representation of him; as it cannot be doubted, on looking at the plate, that it is an exact likeness of Maximilian.

“ The meaning of this plate is not generally understood. Very few have noticed that the emperor is evidently irritated at the injustice of his minister, at whose head he is shaking his broken sword, certainly because he has in some way or other cheated of his rights the poor farmer, who is kneeling, full of hope, and with upcast eyes, at the feet of the emperor :* at which time, just as he is about to do a good action, Death summons him to his grave. As a contrast to this, his contemporary, the king of France, who quarrelled with the emperor, is pictured receiving an ignoble death, while eating and drinking. Furthermore, the

* This monarch was anxious to appear as great and glorious; and it was under his patronage and at his expense, that the illustrated volume, ‘The Wise King,’ a poetical account of his own life and adventures, was got up, as well as another in which he was typified under the form of the hero knight, Sir Thuerdank.

empress (pl. 10) is represented as quietly walking with dignity towards the grave, Death (disguised, perhaps, as the nurse of her childhood) persuasively leading her there; the empress having left her palace, not surrounded with waiting-maids and parasites, but with nuns and religious women, who are dressed in black, and carry rosaries, which, perhaps, they will lay on the dead empress, who is quietly reflecting on those who have gone to the grave before her.* As a contrast to this, we have the death of the terrified queen (pl. 11), who, surrounded by maids of honour and courtiers, is crying terribly, and resisting Death, who, in the habit of a jester, is accosting her in the midst of her follies. May not this be the wife of the worldly king of France? We see, therefore, in these contrasting pictures, the distinction between the wise and noble German emperor, and his enemy, the vain king of France; giving the key to the ruling spirit which guided the hand of the reflective and German-thinking artist."

In the above summary, it will be noticed that the cuts are unhesitatingly ascribed to Holbein; but it must not be concealed, that strong doubts have been enter-

* This description is more fanciful than correct. They are neither nuns nor religious women; the black hoods they wear are the fashionable velvet French hoods of the day; their sleeves edged with dark velvet, and their whole costume is what was then usually worn by court ladies, as may be seen in portraits of the time, by Holbein and others.

tained and expressed of his having designed the series at all. This adverse opinion was first promulgated by Mr. J. S. Hawkins, in a brief introduction to Bewick's 'Emblems of Mortality,' a series of copies of the old 'Dance of Death,' published by T. Hodgson, in 1789; and by Douce, in the dissertation we have so often quoted. The chief point for the foundation of these doubts occurs in the following passage, in the dedication of the original edition of 1538 to the Abbess Jeanne de Touszelle, of the convent of St. Peter, at Lyons, in which the author, after praising her piety, and enforcing the moral utility of the work which he thus dedicates to her, continues: "To return, then, to our cuts of Death, we now very justly regret the death of him who has here designed such elegant figures, exceeding as much all examples hitherto given as the paintings of Apelles, or of Zeuxis, exceed the moderns. For his sorrowful pictures, with their descriptions gravely versified, excite such admiration in the beholders, that the figures of Death appear most life-like, and those of the living as vivid pictures of mortality; which makes me think that Death, fearing that this excellent painter would imbue his representations with so much vitality, that he would cease to be dreaded as Death, and fearful that the artist would by this means become immortal, determined to shorten his life, and thus prevent him from finishing other subjects which he had already drawn. Among others, is that of a waggoner overthrown

and bruised under his broken waggon ; the wheels and horses of which are represented as so frightfully maimed, that as much fear is excited in viewing their downfall, as there is amusement in contemplating the liquorishness of one figure of Death, who is roguishly sucking through a reed the wine from the broken cask. To such imperfect subjects, as to the inimitable heavenly bow Iris, no one has dared to put the last hand, because of the bold drawing, perspectives, and shadows contained in this inimitable work, which is so gracefully delineated, that all may derive a pleasing sadness in it as a thing mournfully delightful."

The arguments which have been adduced from this passage to disprove Holbein's connexion with the work as its designer, and the rejoinder substantiating his claim, have occupied a considerable space,* and are in some degree diffuse and complicated. They may be briefly stated as follows :—The designer of the Dance of Death is spoken of as dead before the work had been completed. Now this is printed in 1538, but Holbein did not die till 1554, "and therefore it could not be he." Mr. Douce sums up his opinion in these words, declaring that the dedication "seems very

* In the introduction to the 'Emblems of Mortality,' 1789, and Douce's 'Dissertation on the Dance of Death,' 1833, on the one side; and, on the other side, by Mr. W. Ottley, in his 'Enquiry into the Origin and Early History of Engraving,' 1816, and Mr. W. A. Chatto, author of a 'Treatise on Wood-Engraving, Historical and Practical,' published by C. Knight, 1839.

strongly, if not decisively, to point out the edition to which it is prefixed as the first, and, what is of still more importance, to deprive Holbein of any claim to the *invention* of the work. It most certainly uses such terms of art as can scarcely be mistaken as conveying any other sense than that of originality in design. There cannot be words of plainer import than those which describe the painter, as he is expressly called, delineating the subjects and leaving several of them unfinished; and, whoever the artist might have been, it clearly appears that he was not living in 1538. Now it is well known that Holbein's death did not take place before the year 1554, during the plague which ravaged London at that time. If, then, the expressions used in this dedication signify anything, it may surely be asked what becomes of any claim on the part of Holbein to the designs of the work in question, or does it not at least remain in a situation of doubt and difficulty?" He also conceives that it is "scarcely possible that he should have used the word *imagined*, which undoubtedly expresses originality of invention, and not the mere act of copying, if he had referred to an engraver on wood, whom he would not have dignified with the appellation of a painter on whom he was bestowing the highest possible eulogium. There would also have been much less occasion for the author's hyperbolical fears on the part of Death in the case of an engraver, than in that of a painter. He has stated

that the rainbow subject, meaning probably that of the Last Judgment, was left unfinished, but it appears among the engravings in his edition; he must therefore have referred to a painting, with which likewise the expression 'bold shadows and perspective,' seem better to accord than with a slight engraving on wood. He had also seen the subject of the waggon with the wine-casks in its unfinished state, and in this case we may almost with certainty pronounce it to have been a painting, as the cut of it does not appear in the first edition, furnishing at the same time an argument against Holbein's claim; nor may it be unimportant to add, that the dedicator, a religious person, and probably a man of some eminence, was much more likely to have been acquainted with the painter than the engraver." He also lays stress upon the following lines in an edition of the 'Nugæ,' of Nicholas Borbonius, the friend of Holbein, printed at Lyons in 1538:

" *De Hanso Ulbio et Georgio Reperdio, pictoribus.*
 Videre qui vult Parrhasium cum Zeuxide,
 Accersat à Britannia
 Hausum Ulbium, et Georgium Reperdium.
 Lugduno ab urbe Galliæ.

In which verses Reperdius is opposed to Holbein for the excellence of his art, in like manner as Parrhasius has been considered as the rival of Zeuxis. Yet of this much-praised artist no particulars whatever either of his life or works have been discovered. "It

is clear, from Borbonius's lines, that he was then living at Lyons, and it is extremely probable that he might have begun the work in question, and have died before he could complete it, and that the Lyons publishers might afterwards have employed Holbein to finish what was left undone, as well as to make designs for original subjects which appeared in the subsequent editions. Thus would Holbein be so connected with the work as to obtain in future such notice as would constitute him the real inventor of it."

Another argument has been adduced against Holbein's claim, from the appearance of the monogram of H. L. conjoined, upon the bedstead in plate 36, and which monograms upon old wood-engravings are the initials of the *designer* and not *the engraver* of the cuts,* and this has been considered as that of Hans Lutzelburger, a celebrated engraver of Basle, the

* The variety of *styles* in which the mere workmanship of the cuts attributed to Durer and the older German artists who *drew* upon the wood are executed, will lead a critical eye easily to decide the truth of this fact. But it was customary to place the initials, or name, or monogram of the designer only on these cuts, to the total exclusion of the engraver, who generally cut his on the back of the block of wood upon which he engraved. In the series of wood-engravings, 'The Triumph of Maximilian,' we occasionally see upon the finished cuts the initials of the designer, Hans Burgmair, but there are on the backs the names in full of fourteen engravers, and the initials of three more. Mr. Chatto observes, "so little were the mere wood-engravers of that period esteemed, that we only incidentally become acquainted with their names; and from their not putting their marks or initials to the cuts which

principal of whose works Mr. Douce has enumerated ;* it has occasioned some confusion, as such monograms are generally used by designers only, and might be that of the designer of these celebrated subjects. It is strange that Mr. Douce should say that this mark as "intended to express the name of the designer, cannot be supported by evidence of any kind," and yet, singularly enough, in the same chapter speak of it as "a very great error," to attribute such marks to the engravers, when they really belong to the designers of the old cuts. Mr. Chatto, who points this out, however, comes to the same conclusion as Douce, "that it is not the mark of the designer," but he arrives at it by different premises. He acknowledges the difficulty of accounting for its appearance alone—thus forming an exception to the rule—and without the mark of the designer, and without any mention of his name, either in the title or the preface of the book. But he adds, that "about the time of the first Lyons

they engraved has arisen the popular error that Durer, Cranach, Burgmair, and others, who are known to have been painters of great repute in their day, were wood-engravers, and executed themselves the woodcuts which bear their marks."—*Treatise on Wood-Engraving*.

* It is not, however, certain that he marked any of his engravings, all of which are uncommonly rare, with H L. Another claimant for the letters has been found in Hans Ludenspelder, a native of Essen, a frontier town in the Duchy of Berg. All is mere conjecture ; it is not likely that the works of either should be unknown or inferior, if they were the designers of the Dance of Death.

edition of the Dance of Death, or a few years before, wood-engravers began to occasionally introduce their name or mark into the cut, in addition to that of the designer. A cut in a German translation of 'Cicero de Officiis,' Frankfort, 1538, contains two marks, one of them being that of Hans Sebald Behaim, and the other, the letters H. W., which I take to be that of the engraver. At a later period this practice became more frequent, and a considerable number of woodcuts, executed between 1540 and 1580, contain two marks; one of the designer, and the other of the engraver; in woodcuts designed by Vigil Solis in particular, double marks are of frequent occurrence;" and he goes on to observe that, as the publishers of the Lyons Dance of Death seem to have been desirous of concealing the name of the designer, and they may have purchased them ready engraved of some Swiss or German artist, as the designs are certainly not French, it surely cannot be surprising that he should wish to affix his mark to these most admirable specimens of art. Add to this, that the engravings may have been executed far away from the superintendence of the designer, and thus he would have uncontrolled liberty to do so, especially if they were a private speculation of his own. "Another reason, perhaps equally as good as any of the foregoing, might be suggested: as those cuts are decidedly the best executed of any of that period, the designer, even if he had opportunities of seeing the proofs, might have

permitted the mark of the engraver to appear on one of them, in approbation of his talent."

The mystery which involves the question, is by no means cleared up by Mr. Douce's arguments, which have been shown by Mr. Chatto to be both unsatisfactory, and even contradictory, to each other. It is curious that the preface to Madame Jeanne de Touszelle, should only appear in the first edition, and be omitted in all others. Mr. Chatto inclines to think the whole preface is intended as a mystification, and "it must be shown that such a person as Madame Jeanne de Touszelle was prioress of the convent of St. Peter, at Lyons, at the time of the first publication of the work;" and he adds, that if such a pious abbess existed, who could have looked upon two of the cuts in the series as conducing to edification, in one of which a couple of fiends appear to be ridiculing the pope, and in another, a nun is represented listening to the guitar of a gallant, seated on her bed, "she must have been an extremely liberal woman for her age." That the publishers themselves had some doubts upon the safety of these satires on the church is extremely probable, and may have been the motive for the concealment of names in the first edition; and equally good reasons may have influenced the designer: "had the Roman Catholic party considered the cuts of the pope, the nun, and two or three others, as the covert satire of a *reformed* painter, the publisher and the designer

would have been as likely to incur danger, as to reap profit and fame."

The allusion to some of the cuts in this preface, upon which so much stress has been laid, is by no means so clear or satisfactory as to lead us to depend upon the accuracy of the old writer. He speaks of the cut of the waggoner as representing Death roguishly sucking the wine out of a broken cask by means of a reed. Yet that is not the case, and would lead us to doubt his having seen the cut. Death is merely unloosing the cord or chain which fastens the casks in the waggon, by untwisting the piece of wood used to tighten it, and with which every one of them have been secured. The second figure of Death is bearing off the waggon wheel, and the other is but assisting his fellow in the work of destruction. Again, the waggoner is described as lying crushed beneath the waggon; so far from this being the case, he is standing unhurt beside it, clasping his hands in despair over his head, and uttering loud cries of embarrassment. It is evident that very little solid argument can be deduced from so loose a document as this preface. The allusion to the rainbow made in it, which Mr. Douce believes to be that which appears in the cut of the Last Judgment, and which was left unfinished by the death of the designer, Mr. Chatto takes to be a figurative passage quite in character with the affected style of the entire dedication. The writer evidently means that the natural rainbow, would be as difficult to imitate as these designs.

The first edition having sold off, the work became popular, and the fears of the publishers quieted, there was no longer a reason for this preface, and it never afterwards appeared. The unfinished state of the work alluded to in the first edition, Mr. Chatto considers to have been occasioned by the death of *the engraver*, an opinion which may be received in all faith, because they are finished in other editions, and equally good and new ones added. If we deny the honour to Holbein of these designs, the same writer observes that we necessarily set up a totally unknown person, of whom no record has been preserved, as an equally great artist, for the designs are certainly equal to the best of that period.* Borbonius's other epigram, too, he says, is but an echo of the address to the abbeſs.

“Dum mortis Hansus pictor imaginem exprimit,
Tanta arte mortem retulit, ut mors vivere
Videatur ipsa: et ipse se immortalibus
Parem Diis fecerit, operis hujus gloria.”

Borbonius certainly knew who was the designer of the cuts, as he was at Lyons when they were first published, was connected with the printers, and wrote some verses in front of the ‘*Icones Historiarum Veteris Testamenti*,’

* Mr. Chatto observes, “Mr. Douce seems to lay some weight on the word *picta*, which was applied equally to wood-engravings and paintings.” The loose way in which literary men of the present day occasionally describe engravings, may still be seen by their calling woodcuts *plates*, and copper-plate engravings *cuts*.

published by them in 1538, which he knew Holbein designed and in which series was *included* the first four cuts of the Dance of Death. The other cuts, as *engravings*, are by no means equal to the Dance of Death, which may be accounted for by the death of that excellent engraver. They have evidently been done by various persons, and some are much coarser in execution than others; but the designs exhibit peculiarities of the same kind as are visible in the Dance of Death, even to form of trees or folds of dress. Add to this, that we have the evidence of his contemporaries, that he was the designer of the Bible cuts, which include some of the *Dance*, and we may agree with Mr. Chatto in "feeling thoroughly assured that Holbein was the designer of the cuts of the first edition of the Lyons Dance of Death."*

It now remains for us to say a few words on the various editions of this popular work. The first edition, as it has been called, with the cuts printed on one side of the paper only, appears to have been printed off as specimens, this has been already noticed; the true

* Douce refers to a Dance of Death, said to have been painted at Whitehall, as the one done by Holbein; but this is clearly proved by Mr. Chatto to be very far from an historical fact. It is noticed only by one writer, T. Nieuhoff Piccard, who copied and published nineteen etchings after the Lyons Dance of Death, dedicating them to an English nobleman, whose name or existence cannot be traced satisfactorily, and who is stated to have been lord of two castles, Rhoeu and Pendraght, which are nowhere to be found!! The structure of the whole story is a mere house of cards.

first edition was printed without publisher's name, at Lyons, in 1538, with the title and preface, of which a copy is given at the end of this introduction. The printers' names were Melchior and Gaspar Trechsel: it appears that their establishment fell into the hands of John and Francis Frellon, who published a second edition in 1542. Both these editions contain the same number of cuts—forty-one—with a text of Scripture, in Latin, above each, and four lines of French verse beneath. In the third edition of 1545, these verses are translated into Latin. All these editions have some few moral tracts appended, to swell out the volume, although they have little or nothing to do with the subject. To one of these, Cyprian's *Sermo de Mortalité*, a cut of a lame beggar is introduced as a tail-piece; it is not like the other cuts in design or execution, yet it was preserved in other editions, and ultimately placed in the series of the Dance of Death, in which it now forms plate 47. In the fourth edition of 1547, the most important additions were made, consisting of plates 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46 of our edition, followed by the four groups of children. The title was altered into '*Imagines Mortis*,' and sometimes into '*Icones Mortis*;' and another edition (the fifth) appeared in the same year, with '*Les Images de la Mort*' for its title, and having French verses, as in the first edition.*

* In 1549 an edition in Italian was published by Frellon, in consequence of the piracies to which the work had been subject.

In 1554, a sixth French edition appeared, the title, &c., of which is also reprinted in the following pages, to exhibit the variations made between it and the original edition; and, in 1562, a seventh, to which were added five new cuts, which do not appear in our series, consisting of a young husband carried away by Death; and a young woman led by the hand by the same grisly guide, who is preceded by a young man who plays the guitar;* and three more groups of children, similar in style to those which appear in the previous edition. The lame beggar, although evidently having nothing to do with the series, is placed not at the end, but among the others; it is the only one in which Death takes no part. After this period, no additional plates were introduced.

Of the pirated editions, it is not necessary here to say much: we may only allude to them as proofs of the great popularity of the work. The most celebrated and best known copy was that etched by Hollar, and which appears to have been executed with some variations from that published at Cologne, in 1555. They are etched with all the care of that exquisite artist, and are surrounded by borders designed by Diepenbecke, which are executed on separate plates, and can be used indiscriminately with any of the series, which sometimes are to be met with without them.

* These two subjects have been copied by Bewick in his 'Emblems of Mortality,' 1789, pp. 48, 49.

The great popularity which attended these old engravings appears to have thrown all competition into the shade ; and we do not meet with any rival series, although they must have produced a large sum to the proprietors. It was not until a comparatively modern period, that we find new designs made upon this famous old subject. For although such designs are occasionally to be met with in the borders, initial letters, or other ornaments in books, it does not appear that any artist or engraver had the hardihood to place his inventions in juxtaposition or rivalry with the elegant designs of Holbein. Douce has enumerated many of these minor illustrations ; but the first newly-designed Dance, after our more famous one, appears to have been executed by two brother artists of Zurich, Rodolph and Conrad Meyer, or Meyern, and published in 1650 ; it consisted of sixty masterly designs, chiefly by Rodolph Meyer, which were as beautifully etched by his brother Conrad. This work went through many editions, the dresses being modernized to suit the fashions worn at the time of their republication.

Since this period, some other series have been designed by Dutch, German, French, and English artists, but they are of comparatively modern date. In our own country, the two latest are those designed by Rowlandson, the ‘ English Dance of Death,’ in seventy-two plates, published by Ackerman, in 1815 ; and ‘ Death’s Doings,’ in twenty-four plates, designed and

etched by R. Dagley, 1826. Mr. Douce also says, that the subject was engraved on ladies' fans!

Its extensive popularity may be traced in our literature; and particularly in that portion of it devoted to the people. The old ballads, so frequently "moral and sententious," occasionally present us with instances. Thus, the 'Deadman's Song,' reprinted in Evans's 'Old Ballads,' vol. i, may be traced to the 'Dance of Death,' from whence, no doubt, "the maker" received his inspiration. The deadman, in the ballad, recounts his experience of the reward of sin in the future world, as a warning to repentance. Among the Roxburghe ballads, now in the British Museum, is one entitled 'Death's Uncontrollable Summons, or the Mortality of Mankind; being a dialogue between Death and a young man,' which calls to mind the picture and verses formerly in the Hungerford Chapel, at Salisbury, and described in page 37. In it Death is described as an old man, who rouses the youth from his temporary sleep, to his final one—

" An ancient father stood by me,
Hey ho, hey ho, hollow eyes.
A foule diformed wight was he,
I thought my youth did him despise.

His cloak was green, his head was gray,
Hey ho, hey ho, silver hair;
His face was pale as any clay,
His countenance made me much to fear.

The young man requests (like the condemned jester of the old tale, who is allowed a choice of deaths) to die of old age, and he offers his wealth for a respite, which Death scorns; he then exclaims—

“ Oh Death ! what will my true love say ?
 Hey ho, hey ho, shee'l complain
 On thee for taking me away :
 Sweet Death, with her let me remain.”

But Death, still inexorable, answers—

“ I tell thee yet thou strivest in vain ;
 Hey ho, hey ho, go, 'tis time.
 Thy vital thread is cut in twain ;
 Oh hark ! and hear the dulsome chyme !”

The young man finds the summons is indeed “ uncontrollable,” and concludes the ballad with these admonitory stanzas :—

“ Then woe is me ! I must begone,
 Hey ho, hey ho ! heavy heart :
 My world's delight and all is done ;
 Was never man so loath to part.

Mark well my fall, you youthful buds,
 Hey ho, hey ho, view my fall :
 My pleasures, plenty, life, and goods.
 Hey ho, hey ho !—Death ends all !”*

This ballad is certainly as old as the days of Eliza-

* This ballad is reprinted entire in Mr. Collier's 'Book of Roxburghe Ballads.'

beth, at which time the following one was popular, which is also preserved in the same collection as that preceding, and reminds us in its construction of the 'London Lickpenny,' of Lydgate; and the 'Complaint of Conscience,' published in 'Percy's Reliques;' as well as of the 'Dance of Macaber.' It is called 'Death's Dance,' and is here given entire. It is a curious picture of manners in the metropolis at the close of the sixteenth century, as well as an interesting illustration of the popularity of moralizations on death.

" If Death would come to shew his face
As he dare shew his powre,
And sit at many a rich man's place
Both every day and houre,
He would amaze them every one
To see him standing there,
And wish that soone he would be gone
From all their dwellings faire.

Or if that Death would take the paines
To goe to the water side,
Where merchants purchase golden gaines
To pranke them up in pride,
And bid them thinke upon the poore,
Or else—'I'll see you soone,'
There would be given them at their doore
Good almes, both night and noone.

Or walke into the Royall Exchange
When every man is there,
No doubt his comming would be strange
To put them all in feare,

How they do worldly buy and sell,
 To make their markets good;
 Their dealings all would prosper well,
 If so the matter stood.

Or if Death would take the paine
 To go to Paul's one day,
 To talke with such as there remaine
 To walke, and not to pray;*
 Of life they would take lasting lease,
 Though ne're so great a fine:
 What is not that but some would give
 To set them up a shrine?

If Death would go to Westminster
 To walke about the Hall,
 And make himself a counsellor
 In pleas amongst them all,
 I think the Court of Conscience
 Would have a great regard,
 When Death should come, with diligence,
 To have their matters heard.

For Death hath been a Checker-man†
 Not many yeares agoe,
 And he is such a one as can
 Bestow his checking so,
 That ne'er a clarke within the hall
 Can argue soe his case,
 But Death can over-rule them all
 In every court and place.

* The centre aisle of the Cathedral was used at this time as a general rendezvous for the idle, and a promenade for the vain. The poets and dramatists of the latter part of the fifteenth and earlier half of the sixteenth century abound with allusions to the irreverent scenes enacted in the "walks of Paul's" as they were termed.

† A pun upon the designation of the Exchequer lawyers.

If Death would keepe a tippling-house
 Where roysters* do resort,
 And take the cup and drinke carouse
 When they are in their sport,
 And briefly say—‘My masters all,
 Why stand you idle here?
 I bring to you Saint Giles his bowle!†
 ’Twould put them all in feare.

If Death would make a step to dance
 Where lusty gallants be,
 Or take the dice and throw a chance
 When he doth gamesters see,
 And say—‘My masters, have at all!
 I warrant it will be mine.
 They would in amazement fall,
 To set‡ him any coine.

If death would gossip now and then,
 Amongst the crabbed wives,
 That taunt and raile at their good men,
 To make them weary lives.
 It would amaze them, I might say,
 So spitefully to boast,
 That they will beare the swing and sway
 And overrule the roast.

* Noisy swaggerers.

† It was an old custom to present criminals with a bowl of ale or a cup of wine at St. Giles's in the Fields, on their way to Tyburn, it being about half way between that place and Newgate. On one occasion it was refused by a criminal, who went on, and was hung, before a reprieve which followed him could reach Tyburn; and hence arose the saying of “the man who was hung for refusing his drink.”

‡ Used in the sense of the modern *bet*.

If Death but quarterly would come
Amongst the landlordes crue,
And take account of every sum
That rises more than due,
As well of income as of fine,
Above the old set rent,
They would let leases without coine,
For fear they should be shent.*

If Death would take his dayly course
Where tradesmen sell their ware,
His welcome, sure, would be more worse
Than those of monyes bare ;
It would affright them for to see
His leane and hollow lookes ;
If Death would say—‘ Come, show to me
My reckoning in your bookes.’

If Death would through the markets trace
Where Conscience used to dwell,
And take but there a huckster’s place,
He might do wondrous well :
High prices would abated be
And nothing found too deare ;
When Death should call—‘ Come, buy of me !’
’Twould put them all in feare !

If Death would prove a gentleman
And come to court our dames,
And do the best of all he can
To blazen forth their names ;
Yet should he little welcomes have
Amongst so fayre a crew,
That daily go so fine and brave
When they his face do view.

* Discomfited.

Or if he would but walke aboute
 Our city suburbs round,*
 There would be given, out of doubt,
 Full many a golden pound,
 To spare our wanton female crew,
 And give them longer day;
 But Death will grant no leases new,
 But take them all away.

For Death hath promised to come,
 And come he will indeede:
 Therefore I warne you, one and all,
 Beware and take good heede;
 For what you do, or what you be,
 Hee's sure to find and know you;
 Though hee be blind, and cannot see,
 In earth he will bestow you."

There is another 'Dance and Songe of Death,' by one Thomas Hill, among the additional MSS. in the British Museum, No. 15,225, a printed copy of which is in the Roxburghe collection of Ballads; the registers of the Stationers' Company notice the receipt in 1568, of fourpence, from John Awdeley, the printer, for his license for printing it. There are several ballads, also, to the popular tune of 'The Shaking of the Sheets, or the Dance of Death,' one of which begins,—

* The suburbs of London at the time when this ballad was written, and at a much earlier period, were notorious as the place of residence of lewd women. Southwark, Coleman street, Turnbul street, and Whetstone park, were all thus celebrated.

“Can you dance the shaking of the sheets,
A dance that every one must do;
Can you trim it up with dainty sweets
And every thing that 'longs thereto.”

The sheet alluded to is, of course, the winding-sheet. But, perhaps, the most popular of all these ballads, was ‘Death and the Lady,’ which is not yet forgotten by old persons. The same sentiment was exhibited in others. ‘The Midnight Messenger, or a sudden call from an earthly glory to the cold grave, in a dialogue between Death and a Rich Man,’ is of this kind; and a dialogue between an ‘Exciseman and Death.’* The scriptural phrase of “In the midst of life we are in death,” was also pictured forth in very popular prints, representing a gentleman and lady, one half of each being delineated in the most fashionable costume, and the other half as a skeleton. But none of these achieved the popularity of ‘Death and the Lady,’ which was known by heart by most persons in the humbler classes of life; and the concluding lines of which (omitted in some versions) have been converted into an epitaph, to be found in most of our village churchyards. It is a production of the latter part of the seventeenth century, and the tune is mentioned as old in 1738.

* They are both printed in Mr. Dixon's Ballads and Songs of the Peasantry of England, published by the Percy Society.

A DIALOGUE BETWIXT DEATH AND A LADY.

DEATH.

Fair lady, lay your costly robes aside,
No longer may you glory in your pride;
Take leave of all your carnal vain delight,
I'm come to summon you away this night!

LADY.

What bold attempt is this? Pray let me know
From whence you come, and whither I must go?
Must I, who am a Lady, stoop or bow
To such a pale-fac'd visage? Who art thou?

DEATH.

Do you not know me? well!—I tell thee, then,
It's I that conquer all the Sons of Men!
No pitch of honour from my dart is free;
My name is Death! have you not heard of me?

LADY.

Yes! I have heard of thee time after time,
But being in the glory of my prime,
I did not think you would have call'd so soon.
Why must my morning sun go down at noon?

DEATH.

Talk not of noon! you may as well be mute;
This is no time at all for a dispute:
Your riches, garments, gold, and jewels brave,
Houses, and lands must all new owners have;
Tho' thy vain heart to riches was inclin'd,
Yet thou must die and leave them all behind.

LADY.

My heart is cold ; I tremble at the news ;
There's bags of gold, if thou wilt me excuse,
And seize on them, and finish thou the strife
Of those that are aweary of their life.
Are there not many bound in prison strong,
In bitter grief of soul have languish'd long,
Who could but find a grave a place of rest,
From all the grief in which they are opprest ?
Besides, there's many with a hoary head
And palsied joints, by which their joys are fled ;
Release those then whose sorrows are so great,
But spare my life to have a longer date !

DEATH.

Though some by age be full of grief and pain,
Yet their appointed time they must remain :
I come to none before their warrant's seal'd,
And when it is, they must submit and yield.
I take no bribe, believe me, this is true ;
Prepare yourself to go ; I'm come for you.

LADY.

Death, be not so severe, let me obtain
A little longer time to live and reign !
Fain would I stay if thou my life will spare.
I have a daughter beautiful and fair,
I'd live to see her wed whom I adore :
Grant be but this, and I will ask no more.

DEATH.

This is a slender frivolous excuse ;
I have you fast, and will not let you loose ;
Leave her to Providence, for you must go
Along with me, whether you will or no ;
I, Death, command the king to leave his crown,
And at my feet he lays his sceptre down !

Then if to kings I don't this favour give,
 But cut them off—can you expect to live
 Beyond the limits of your time and space?
 No! I must send you to another place.

LADY.

You learned Doctors, now express your skill,
 And let not Death of me obtain his will;
 Prepare your cordials, let me comfort find,
 My gold shall fly like chaff before the wind.

DEATH.

Forbear to call, their skill will never do;
 They are but mortals here as well as you:
 I give the fatal wound, my dart is sure,
 And far beyond the Doctors' skill to cure.
 How freely can you let your riches fly
 To purchase life, rather than yield to die!
 But while you flourish here with all your store,
 You will not give one penny to the poor;
 Though in God's name their suit to you they make,
 You would not spare one penny for his sake!
 The Lord beheld wherein you did amiss,
 And calls you hence to give account for this!

LADY.

Oh! heavy news!—must I no longer stay?
 How shall I stand in the great Judgment Day?
 (Down from her eyes the crystal tears did flow:
 She said) None knows what I do undergo:
 Upon my bed of sorrow here I lie:
 My carnal life makes me afraid to die.
 My sins, alas! are many, gross, and foul;
 Oh, righteous Lord! have mercy on my soul!
 And though I do deserve thy righteous frown,
 Yet pardon, Lord, and pour a blessing down.
 (Then with a dying sigh her heart did break,
 And did the pleasures of this world forsake.)

Thus may we see the high and mighty fall,
For cruel Death shows no respect at all
To any one of high or low degree;
Great Men submit to Death as well as we.
Though they are gay, their life is but a span—
A lump of clay—so vile a creature's man.
Though happy those whom Christ has made his care,
Who die in the Lord, and ever blessed are.
The Grave's the Market-place where all men meet,
Both rich and poor, as well as small and great,
If life were merchandize that gold could buy,
The rich would live, the poor alone would die.



TITLE AND DEDICATION

OF THE

“*Simulachres de la Mort,*”

FROM THE FIRST EDITION,

PRINTED AT LYONS IN 1538 :

AND

TITLE, INDEX, AND EPIGRAM

OF THE

“*Icones Mortis,*”

FROM THE SIXTH EDITION,

PRINTED AT BASLE IN 1554.

Les fimulachres &

HISTORIEES FACES

DE LA MORT, AVTANT ELE

gamēt pourtraictes, que artifi
ciellement imaginees.

Here is placed
the emblem of the printer,
being
an Hermes with three heads
on a base
where these words are written :

ΓΝΩ	Α
ΘΙ	Υ
ΣΕ	ΤΟΝ

and from whence spring
two chains which join
the two worlds,
with this motto :

Usus me genuit.

A LYON,

Soubz l'escv de COLOIGNE

M. D. XXXVIII.

A MOULT REVERENDE

abbesse du religieux convent S^t-Pierre
de Lyon, madame Jéhanne de
Touszelle, salut d'un
vray zèle.

J'ay bon espoir, Madame et mère très religieuse, que de ces espoventables simulachres de mort aurez moins d'ébaissement que vivante. Et que ne prendrez a mauvais augure, si a vous, plus que a nulle austre sont dirigez. Car de tout temps par mortification, et austère vie, en tant de divers cloistres transmuée par autorité royalle, estant là l'exemplaire de religieuse religion et réformée réformation, avez eu avec la mort telle habitude, qu'en sa mesme fosse et sepulchrale dormition ne vous scauroit plus estroitement enclorre, qu'en la sepulture du cloistre, en la quelle n'avez seulement en sepvely le corps : mais cueur et esprit quand et quand, voire une si liberale et entiere devotion qu'ils n'en veulent jamais sortir, fors comme saint Pol, pour aller a Jesus-Christ. Lequel bon Jesus, non sans divine providence, vous a baptisée du nom et surnom au mien unisonamment consonnant, excepté en la seule lettre de T, lettre, par fatal secret, capitale de votre surnom : pour autant que c'est ce caractère de

thau, tant célèbre vers les Hebreux et vers les Latins, pris a triste mort. Aussi par saint Hiérome appelé lettre de croix et de salut : merueilleusement convenant aux salutaires croix supportées de tous voz zéles en sainte religion. Lesquels zéles la Mort n'a osé approcher, quelques visitations que Dieu vous ayt faictes par quasi continuelles maladies, pour non contrevenir a ce fourrier Ezéchiel, qui vous auroit marquée de son thau, signe deffensable de toute mauulvaise mort, qui me faict croire que vous serez de ceulx, desquels est escript, quilz ne gousteront la mortifère amertume. Et que tant s'en faudra que ne rejétiez ces funèbres histoires de mondaine mortalité, comme maulsades et mélancoliques, que mesme admonestée de saint Jaques, considererés le visaige de votre nativité en ces mortels miroirs, desquels les mortels sont dénnomez comme tous subjects a la mort, et a tant de miserables misères, en sorte que déplaisant à vous mêmes, estudiérez de complaire à Dieu, jouxte la figure racontée en exode, disant, qu'à l'entrée du tabernacle avoit une ordonnance de miroirs, afin que les entrants se pussent en iceulx contempler : Et aujourd'huy sont telz spirituelz miroirs, mis à l'entrée des eglises et cymitieres, jadis par Diogènes révisitéz pour veoir si entre les ossements des mortz pourroit trouver aucune différence des riches et des pouvres. Et si aussi les payens pour se refréner de mal faire, aux entrées de leurs maisons,

ordonnoient fosses et tombeaux en mémoire de la mortalité a tous préparée, doivent les chrestiens avoir horreur d'y penser? Les images de mort seront elles à leurs yeulx tant effrayeuses, quilz ne les veulent veoir n'en ouyr parlementer? C'est le vray et propre miroir auquel on doit corriger les difformitéz du péché et embéllir l'ame. Car, comme saint Grégoire dit, qui considère comment il sera a la mort, deviendra craintif en toutes ses opérations, et quasy ne se osera monstrier à ses propres yeulx: Et se considère pour la mort, qui ne se ignore devoir mourir. Pour ce que la parfaicte vie est l'imitation de la mort, laquelle solíciteusement parachevée des justes, les conduit à salut. Par ainsi a tous fideles seront ces spectacles de mort en lieu de serpent d'airain, lequel advisé guérissoit les Israélites des morsures serpentines moins venimeuses que les eguillons des concupiscences, desquelles sommes continuellement assailiz. Ici dira ung curieux questionnaire: quelle figure de mort peult estre par vivant représentée? Ou, comment en peuvent déviser ceulx, qui oncques les inexorables forces n'expérimentèrent? Il est bien vray que l'invisible ne se peult par chose visible proprement représenter: mais tout aussi que par les choses créées et visibles, comme est dit en l'*Epistre aux Romains*, on peult voir et contempler l'invisible Dieu et incréé. Paréillement par les choses, lesquelles la mort a fait irrevocables passages, c'est

a sçavoir par les corps es sépulchres cadaverisés et décharnés sus leurs monumentz, on peult extraire quelques simulachres de mort (simulachres les dis je vraiment, pour ce que le simulachre vient de simuler et faindre ce qui n'est point). Et pourtant qu'on n'a peu trouver chose plus approchante à la similitude de mort, que la personne morte, on a d'icelle effigie, simulachres, et faces de mort, pour en nos pensées imprimer la memoire de mort plus au vif, que ne pourroient toutes les réthoriques descriptions des orateurs. A cette cause l'ancienne philosophie estoit en simulachres, et images effigiées. Et qui bien la considérera, toutes les histoires de la Bible ne sont que figures a notre plus ténace instruction. Jesus Christ même ne figuroit il sa doctrine en paraboles, et similitudes, pour mieulx l'imprimer a ceulx auxquels il la preschoit? Et noz saintz peres, n'ont ilz par devotes histoires figuré la plus part de la Bible, encores apparoissantes en plusieurs eglises, comme encor on les voit au cheur de ceste tant venerable eglise de Lyon? Vrayment en cela, et en autres antiques cérémonies admirablement constante observatrice, autour duquel les images là élégamment en relief ordonnées, servent aux illiterez de très utile et contemplative littérature. Que voulut Dieu, quoi qu'en débarrer ces furieux iconomachiens, qui de telles ou semblables images fussent tapissées toutes noz eglises, mais que nos yeulx ne se délectas-

sent a autres plus pernicious spectacles. Donc retournant a noz figures faces de mort, très grandement vient a regréter la mort de celuy, qui nous en a icy imaginé de si élégantes figures, avançantes autant toutes les patronées jusqu'icy, comme les peintures de Appelles ou de Zeusis surmontent les modernes. Car ces histoires funebres, avec leurs descriptions sévèrement rimées, aux advisants donnent telle admiration, qu'ilz en jugent les mortz y apparoistre très vivement, et les vifs très mortement représenter. Qui me faict penser, que la mort craignant que cet excellent painctre ne la paignist tant vive, qu'elle ne fut plus crainte pour mort, et que pour cela luy même n'en devint immortel, que a cette cause elle lui accélèra si fort ses jours, qu'il ne peult parachever plusieurs austres figures, ja par luy tracées : mesme celle du charretier froissé, et espaulti soubz son ruiné charriot, les roes, et chevaux duquel, sont là si epouvantablement trezbuchéz, qu'il y a autant d'horreur a veoir leur précipitation, que de gaie a contempler la friandise d'une mort, qui furtivement succe avec un chalumeau le vin du tonneau effondré. Auxquelles imparfaictes histoires comme a l'inimitable arc celeste appelé iris, nul n'a ose imposer l'extreme main, par les audacieux traitz, perspectives, et umbrages en ce chef d'œuvre comprises, si tant gracieusement déliniées que l'on y peut prendre une déléctable tristesse et une triste déléctation, comme chose tristement

joyeuse. Cessent hardyement les antiquailleurs et amateurs des anciennes images de chercher plus antique antiquité que la pourtraicture de ces mortz. Car en elle voiront l'imperatrice tous vivants invictissime des le commencement du monde regnant. C'est celle qui a triomphé de tous les Césars, empereurs et rois. C'est vrayment l'herculée fortitude qui, non avec sa massue, mais d'une faulx, a fauché et extirpé tous les monstrueux et tyranniques couraiges de la terre. Les regardées Gorgonnes, ni la teste de Meduse ne féirent oncques si etranges metamorphoses ne si diverses transformations, que peust faire l'intentive contemplation de ces faces de mortalité. Or si Sévère empereur romain tenoit en son cabinet, tesmoing Lampridius, les images de Virgile, de Cicero, d'Achilles, et du grand Alexandre, pour a icelles se inciter a vertu, je ne voy point pour quoy nous devons abhominer celles, par lesquelles on est refréné de pecher, et stimulé a toutes bonnes opérations. Dont le petit, mais nul pensement, qu'on met aujourd'huy a la mort, me faict desirer ung autre Hégésias, non pour nous inciter, comme il faisoit en preschant les biens de la mort, a mettre en nous noz violentes mains, mais pour mieulx désirer de parvenir a cette immortalité pour laquelle ce désespéré Chobronte, se précipita en la mer : depuis que sommes plus asseurez de celle beatitude à nous, et non aux payens et incrédules, promise. A laquelle, puisque n'y

pouvons parvenir, que passant par la mort, ne devons nous embrasser, aymer, contempler la figure et représentation de celle, par laquelle on va de peine a repos, de mort a vie eternelle, et de ce monde fallacieux a Dieu véritable et infaillible qui nous a forméz a sa semblance, afin que si ne nous difformons, le puissions contempler face a face quand lui plaira nous faire passer par cette mort, qui est aux justes le plus précieuse chose qu'il eut sceu donner. Par quoy, Madame, prendrez en bonne part ce triste mais salutaire présent. Et persuaderez a vos devotes religieuses la tenir non seulement en leurs petites cellules, ou dortouers, mais au cabinet de leur memoire, ainsi que le conseille saint Hierome en une epistre, disant : Constitue devant tes yeulx cette image de mort, au jour de laquelle le juste ne craindra mal, et pour cela ne le craindre il car il n'entendra, va au feu eternel : mais viens bénist de mon pere, recoys le royaulme a toy préparé des la création du monde. Par quoy qui fort sera, contémne la mort, et l'imbécille la fuye : mais nul peult fuyr la mort, fors celuy, qui fut la vie. Nostre vie est Jesus Christ, et est la vie qui ne sçait mourir. Car il a triumpné de la mort, pour nous en faire triumpher éternellement. Amen.

EXCVDEBANT LVGDVNI
MELCHIOR ET GASPAR TRECHSEL
FRATRES,
1538.

ICONES MORTIS,

DVODECIM Imaginibus præter priores,
totidemque inscriptionibus, præter epi-
grammata è Gallicis à Georgio AEmy-
lio in Latinum versa, cumulatae.

QVAE his addita sunt, sequens pagina
commonstrabit.

BASILEAE,

1554.

INDEX eorum, quæ his MORTIS Imaginibus
accesserunt.

MEDICINA ANIMAE, tam ijs, qui firma, quàm qui
adversa corporis ualeitudine præditi sunt, maximè
necessaria.

PARACLESIS ad periculose decumbentes.

D. CAECILII CYPRIANI episcopi Carthaginensis, Sermo
de MORTALITATE.

ORATIO ad DEVM, apud ægrotum, dum inuisitur,
dicenda.

ORATIO ad CHRISTVM in graui morbo dicenda.

D. CHRYSOSTOMI Patriarchæ Constantinopolitani, de
Patientia, et consummatione huius seculi, de secundo
Aduentu Domini, deq; æternis Iustorum gaudijs,
et Malorum pænis, de silentio, et alijs homini Chris-
tiano ualde necessarijs, Sermo.

AD LECTOREM CHRISTIANVM,

EPIGRAMMA.

ACCIPERE iucundo præsentia carmina vultu,
Seu Germane legis, siue ea Galle legis :
In quibus extremæ qualis sit MORTIS imago,
Reddidit imparibus Musa Latina modis.
Gallia quæ dederat lepidis Epigrammata uerbis,
Teutona conuertens est imitata manus.
Da ueniam nobis doctissime Galle, uidebis
Versibus appositis reddita si qua parum.
Non omnes pariter, nec in omni parte ualemus :
Præcipuam partem semper et error habet.
Sunt tamen appositis quædam sic reddita uerbis,
Omnibus ut sperem posse placere bonis.
Qualiacunque mei sunt hæc monumenta laboris,
Gallia, germano pectore mitto tibi.
Denique cum præstent, me iudice, sacra profanis,
Materiam uoluit sumere Musa piam.
Discimus hinc summam diuini numinis iram,
Quæ uarijs plectit crimina nostra modis.
Discimus et MORTEM peccati reddere pæna,
Omnia quæ tristi corpora falce trahit.
Cumq; triumphatis uictoria maxima CHRISTI
MORTIS et Inferni fregerit arma simul,
Non opus imbellem nimium metuamus ut hostem,
Qui nos ex uarijs ducit in astra malis.

The Dance of Death.

1. The Creation of Eve.

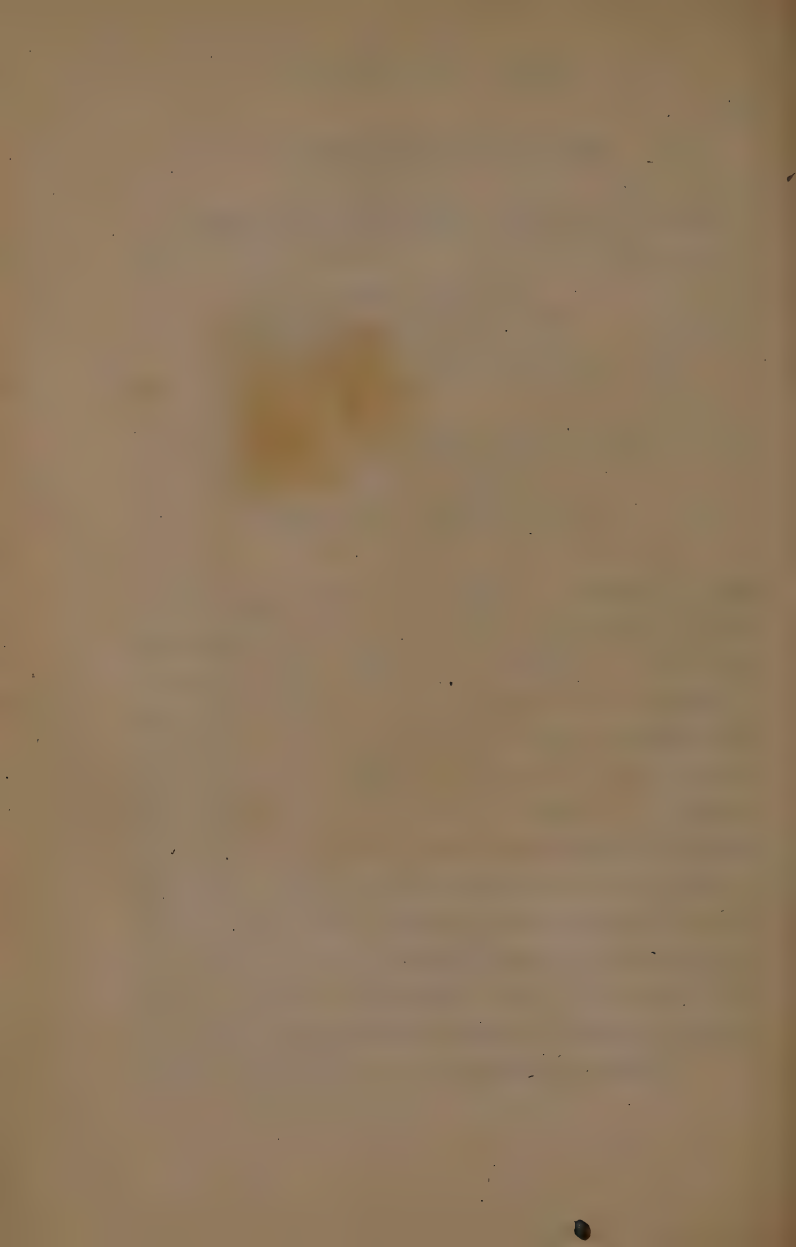
Formavit Dominus Deus hominem de limo terræ, ad imaginem suam creavit illum, masculum et fœminam creavit eos.

Genesis, 1, 2.

DIEU, ciel, mer, terre, procréa
De rien, démontrant sa puissance,
Et puis de la terre créa
L'homme et la femme à sa semblance.

*Principio cælum, terram, pontumque sonantem
Ex nihilo fecit voce potente Deus,
Indè levi terræ divinæ mentis imago
Gignitur, humanum fœmina virque genus.*

THE completion of the work of creation is here represented in the quaint and characteristic style of the middle ages, which often labours to render the subject of a picture clear to the eye at a sacrifice of any appeal to the imagination. This is the case with the present one, which is overcrowded with objects. The denizens of air, earth, and water are brought together in a confused group, accompanied by ethereal imaginings which modern taste would repudiate, in order to assure the spectator of this being the last act of creation. As by woman's frailty sin entered the world, and its concomitant Death, the artist has chosen this subject to commence his series of pictures devoted to the actions of the King of Terrors.







2. The Temptation.

Quia audisti vocem uxoris tuæ, et comedisti de ligno ex quo præceperam tibi ne commederes, etc. *Genesis, 3.*

ADAM fut par EVE deceu,
Et contre DIEU mangea la pomme,
Dont tous deux ont la MORT receu,
Et depuis fut mortel tout homme.

*Fallitur infelix à stultâ conjuge conjux,
Invito comedens tristia poma Deo.
Commeruere gravem scelerato crimine Mortem,
Legibus hinc fati subdita turba sumus.*

THAT great act of disobedience which involved the penalty of Death on all the sons of Adam is here not ungracefully represented. The serpent-tempter, in accordance with most ancient delineations, is represented with a human face; the conversations it held with Eve, and its winning blandishments, suggesting to the imaginations of the earlier artists a creature with a face of surpassing fascination, endowed with all that expressive persuasion capable of effecting so fatal a dereliction of duty. Eve is represented reposing beneath the tree, holding in her hand the fruit of knowledge; Adam, conquered by her persuasion, in an attitude expressive of sudden determination, clasps the trunk of the tree with his left arm and extends his right to pluck another, and complete the sin of their disobedience. His face is strongly characteristic of the conflicting emotions which may be well supposed to have been passing in the mind of the father of the human race.

3. The Expulsion from Paradise.

Emisit eum dominus Deus de paradiso voluptatis, ut operaretur
 terram de quâ sumptus est. *Genesis, 3.*

DIEU chassa l'homme de plaisir
 Pour vivre au labeur de ses mains.
 Alors la MORT le vint saisir,
 Et conséquemment tous humains.

*Expulit Omnipotens hominem de sede beatâ,
 Nutriat ut proprio membra labore, Deus.
 Pallida tum primum vacuum mors venit in orbem ;
 Humanum rapiunt hinc mala fata genus.*

“THE fruit of Sin is Death,” who now appears upon the scene rejoicing at the commencement of his power. Adam and Eve are driven from their Paradise by the angel, who unsheaths his fiery sword and brandishes it above their heads. They fly in despair, preceded by the repulsive monarch of the grave in the form of a skeleton, whose decaying flesh still hangs about his bones. He has provided himself with a musical instrument with which to celebrate, in ghastly merriment, his joy over man's sin.





4. The Curse of Labour.

Maledicta terra in opere tuo, in laboribus comedes cunctis diebus vitæ tuæ, donec revertaris, etc. *Genesis, 3.*

Mauldiete en tòn labeur la terre.
En labeur ta vie useras,
Jusques que la MORT te soubterre,
Toy, poudre, en poudre tourneras.

Sit maledicta tuo sterilis pro crimine tellus.

Vita tibi multi plena laboris erit :

Donec in exiguâ te mors tellure reponet,

Quod fueras primùm, tunc quoque pulvis eris.

“CURSED is the ground for thy sake ; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground.” The words are here fulfilled, and Adam is labouring in the most fatiguing occupation. Death, unable yet to indulge his thirst for human life, gladly assists Adam in uprooting and destroying the trees, and he has abandoned his hour-glass for this purpose, which is seen beside Eve, who, having “in sorrow brought forth” a son, is suckling her infant during a momentary cessation of her own labours with the distaff. This was a favorite subject with the old sculptors and painters, and was generally treated by them in the same way as we here see it. It originated the once popular question—

“When Adam delv’d and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?”

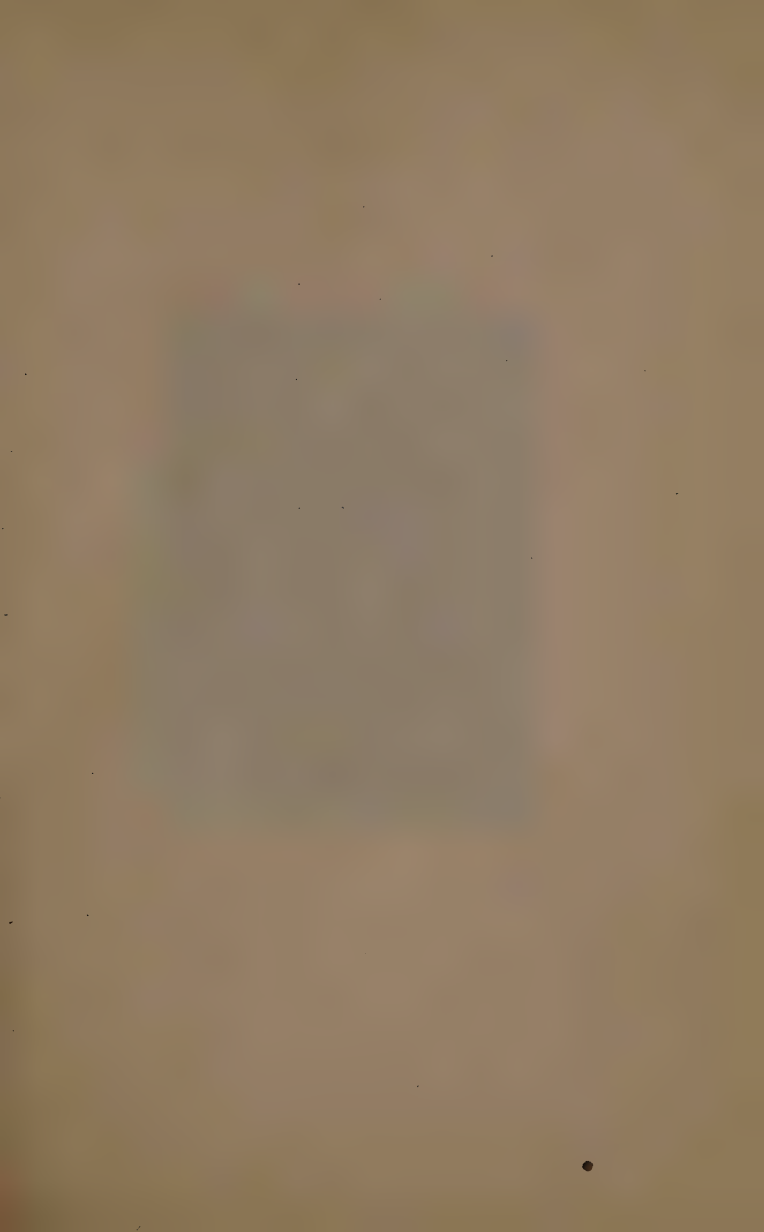
5. The Triumph of Death.

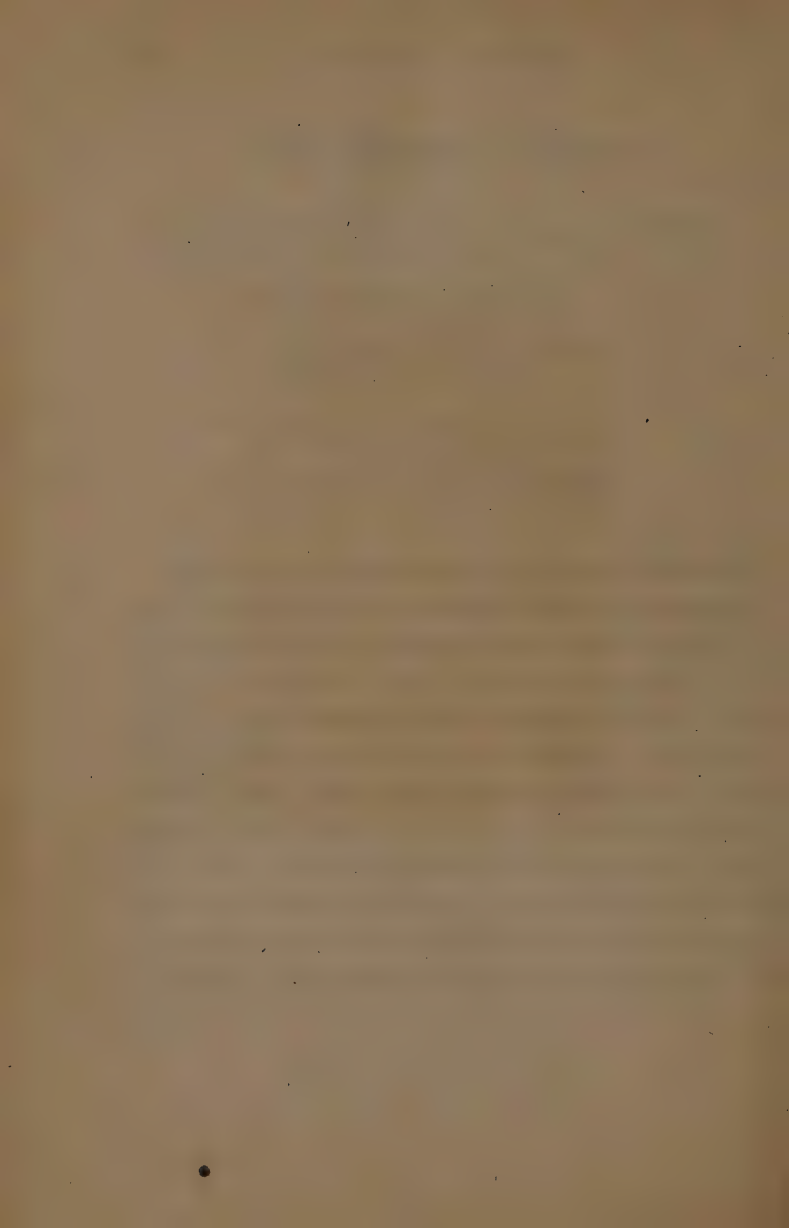
Væ, væ, væ, habitantibus in terra. *Apocalypsis*, 8.
 Cuncta in quibus speraculum vitæ est, mortua sunt. *Genesis*, 7.

Malheureux qui vivez au monde,
 Toujours remplis d'adversitéz,
 Pour quelque bien qui vous abonde,
 Serez tous de mort visitéz.

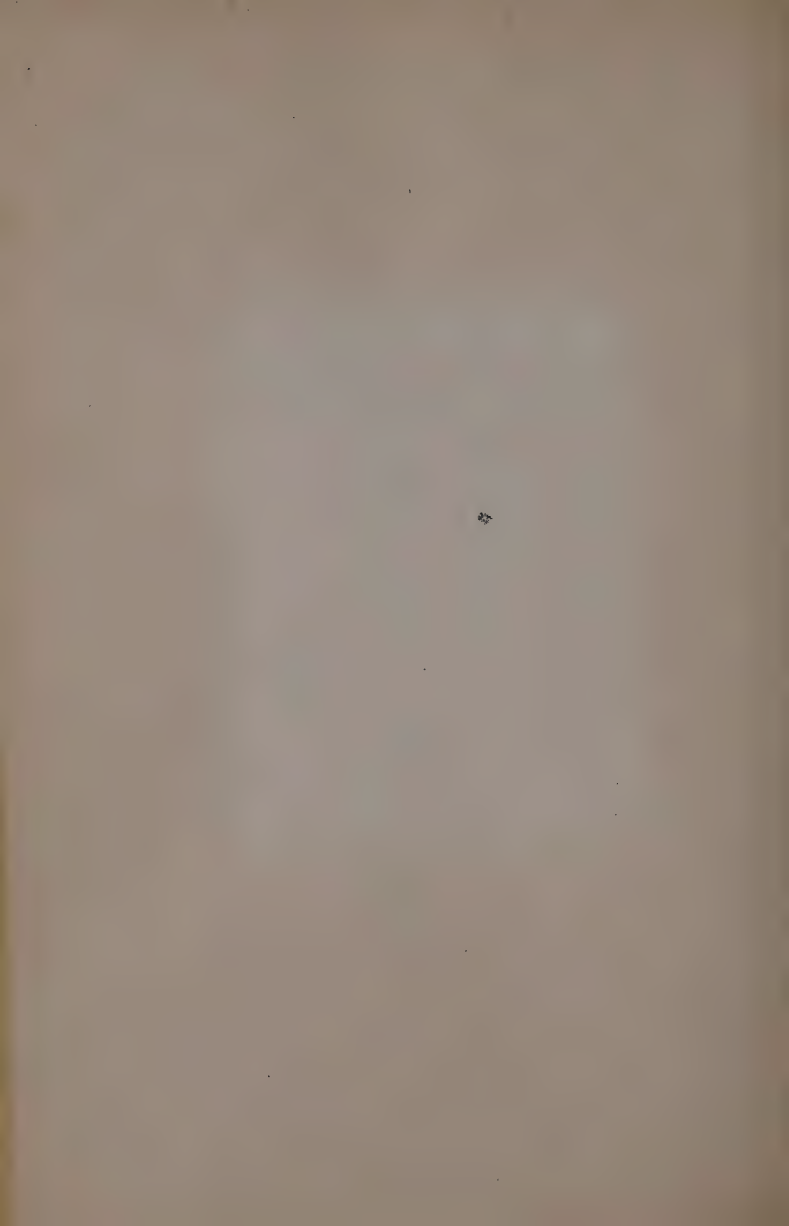
*Væ nimium vobis misero qui vivitis orbe,
 Tempora vos multo plena dolore manent.
 Quantumcumque boni vobis fortuna ministret,
 Pallida Mors veniens omnibus hospes erit.*

THIS subject, entitled in the old editions *Gebeyn aller menschen* (Skeletons of all men), seems like a general act of rejoicing over Death's power secured by the fall of man. Skeletons and half-decayed corpses of all kinds appear endowed with a temporary joy, and are madly summoning all men to the grave; one beats a double drum, others sound trumpets, and one hideous female grinds the *vielle* or hurdy-gurdy of a mendicant. A general joy seems to pervade the grim assembly who crowd the church porch, and leap the low wall which parts them from the summons of their fellows in the cemetery, who stand amid decayed fragments of the dead.











6. The Pope.

Moriatur sacerdos magnus.
Et episcopatum ejus accipiat alter.

Josue, 20.
Psalmistæ, 108.

Qui te cuides immortel estre
Par MORT seras tost dépésché,
Et combien que tu soys grand prestre,
Ung aultre aura ton evesché.

Qui non mortalis vitæ tibi munera ungis,

Rebus ab humanis eripiere brevi.

Maximus es quamvis Romana in sede sacerdos,

Quod geris officium, qui gerat alter erit.

THE series of Death's Dance here commences with the highest earthly potentate, the pope, behind whose chair Death has quietly ensconced himself, looking into his face with much complacency, and placing his bony arm around his shoulders, as he leans forward with his left hand upon a crutch. At the feet of the pope kneels an emperor, who is about to receive from his hands the imperial crown. He has placed the orb by his side upon the ground while he bends forward to kiss the toe of the pontiff. The ceremony is attended by cardinals and bishops. An air of burlesque is thrown over this striking picture of human power by another figure of Death arrayed as a cardinal, who mixes with the throng; there is also a satirical reflection on the papal power in two grotesque demons, one of whom is peeping scornfully at the ceremony, and another contemptuously exhibiting a papal bull, to which many seals are appended. The fantastic supporters of the pope's chair are also not without an emblematic and satiric meaning.

7. The Emperor.

Dispone domui tuæ, mor eris enim tu, et non vives.

Isaiæ, 38.

Ibi morieris, et ibi erit currus gloriæ tuæ.

Isaiæ, 22.

De ta maison disposeras
Comme de ton bien transitoire,
Car là ou MORT reposeras,
Seront les charriotz de ta gloire.

*Sic tibi disponas commissi munera regni
Ut transire alio posse repente putes.
Cur? quia cū vitam susceptā morte repones,
Tunc tuā divulsus gloriā currus erit.*

THIS engraving—one of the finest of the series—depicts Death in his supreme power—a sovereign over kings. It is so completely a counterpart of the fine lines which Shakspeare has put into the mouth of Richard II, that it has been conjectured, and with much apparent justice, to have suggested the lines of the immortal poet (see p. 38 of our Introduction). Dr. Massmann, in his descriptive summary of these engravings, has devoted some attention to this particular one, and has so clearly described the entire subject that we cannot here do better than refer the reader to his words, as given in our Introduction p. 49. The emperor is believed to be a representation of Maximilian I.





8. The King.

Sicut et rex hodie est, et cras morietur, nemo enim ex regibus aliud habuit. *Ecclesiastici*, 10.

Ainsi qu'aujourd'hui il est roy,
 Demain sera en tombe close,
 Car roy aulcun de son arroy
 N'a sceu emporter austre chose.

*Splendida fert hodiè regni quì sceptrà superbus,
 Crastina lux illi tristia fata feret.
 Quisquis enim regni summas moderatur habenas
 Numera discedens non meliora feret.*

THE monarch here represented is Francis I of France (see Introduction, p. 48). He is attired in the most fashionable and expensive costume of the French court, worthy the fantastic originator of "the field of the Cloth of Gold," where English and French outvied each other in extravagant display. The artist, as Dr. Massmann observes (Introduction, pp. 49, 50), has contrasted his position with that of the Emperor Maximilian; the latter, seated on his throne, has his acts of beneficence and justice cut off by Death while they are being executed; but Francis receives the grim visitor unconsciously and ignobly while feasting at his table, and dies in the midst of splendid excess. In this we trace national prejudice guiding the satirical hand of the designer.

9. The Cardinal.

Væ qui justificatis impium pro muneribus, et justitiam justi aufertis ab eo. *Isaïe, 5.*

Mal pour vous qui justifiez
L'inhumain et plain de malice,
Et par dons le sanctifiez,
Otant au juste sa justice.

*Væ nimium vobis qui justificatis iniquum,
Erigitisque malos, deprimitisque bonos.
Donaque sectantes fallacis inania mundi,
Justitiæ verum tollere vultis iter.*

THIS engraving has received two interpretations. The dignitary is seated in a vineyard, and is receiving from the hands of a messenger the bull which constitutes him a cardinal. The messenger, booted and spurred, has sought him in haste, and carried with him into the garden the iron box which had contained the bull and which has been slung over his shoulders. But inexorable Death is about to deprive him of the hat he has just received.

The other, and probably the more correct description of this subject, is that which declares it to represent the sale of an indulgence to a rich offender, who having been guilty of crime has hurried to this powerful cardinal for an exemption from its consequences, laden with an iron-bound chest of money which he has hurriedly strapped round his shoulders, with which to bribe the ecclesiastic, who, nothing loth, frees the offender, when Death summons him to answer the act of injustice in another world.





10. The Empress.

Gradients in superbia potest deus humiliare.—*Danie*, 4.

Qui marchez en pompe superbe,
La MORT un jour vous pliera.
Comme soubz voz piedz ployez l'herbe,
Ainsi vous humiliera.

*Vos quoque quos vitæ delectat pompa superbæ,
Implicitos fatis auferet una dies.
Herba virens pedibus ceu conculcatur euntis,
Ultima sic tristi vos pede fata terent.*

IN the court-yard of a palace and in the midst of her attendant ladies, the empress, arrayed in regal costume, and with the crown on her head, is led suddenly aside out of the line of the procession into the grave by Death, who assumes the figure of an aged and favoured attendant. Dr. Massmann has commented on this and the following engraving in our Introduction, p. 50, to which we would refer the reader.

11. The Queen.

Mulieres opulentæ surgite et audite vocem meam. Post dies
et annum, et vos conturbamini. *Isaiæ*, 32.

Levez vous, dames opulentes,
Oyez la voix des trespassez,
Après maintz ans et jours passez,
Serez troublées et doulentes.

*Huc etiam dominæ matronaque dives adeste,
Sic etenim vobis mortua turba refert:
Post hilares annos, et inanis gaudia mundi,
Turbabit Mortis corpora vostra dolor.*

A CONTRAST to the last plate is here given. The attendants of the queen, unlike those of the more dignified and thoughtful empress, are gay courtiers and parasites, and Death has arrayed himself in the dress of the court jester. Pleased with the trifling of folly, his garb obtains him ready access to the queen, who is speedily undeceived by his cold hand laid on her; the glass with its sands run out taking the place of the fool's bauble. With terror in her countenance, she utters piercing cries, and endeavours to fly from the unwelcome intruder; her gentleman usher aids in her attempt, but Death, with an air of exultation, still keeps his hold, and compels obedience to his mandate; his hurried movement depicts his hasty determination to carry her from the world and its pleasures. For some further remarks on this subject see p. 50.





12. The Bishop.

Percutiam pastorem, et dispergentur oves.—*Mar.*, 14.

Le pasteur aussi frapperay
 Mitres et crosses renversées.
 Et lors quand je l'attrapperay,
 Seront ses brebis dispersées.

*Mors, ego percutiam pastorem, dicit, inermem,
 Illius in terram mitra pedumque cadent.
 Tum pastore suo per vulnera mortis adempto,
 Incustoditæ disjicientur oves.*

“I WILL smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad;” such is the text of St. Mark appended to the original cut, and the words are here very simply and beautifully wrought out. The good bishop, the principal shepherd, is carried away from the midst of his flock, which spreads consternation among the other and subordinate pastors, who betake themselves to flight, leaving the ill-fated sheep a prey to the wolves, to wander in the darkness and danger which await them. The sun is setting, and a night of gloom will speedily enshroud the scene; but a more glorious day is about to open on the good bishop, whose face expresses the calm resignation of a tranquil mind.

13. The Elector.

Princeps induetur mœrore. Et quiescere faciam superbiam
potestatum. *Ezechiæ, 7.*

Vien, prince, avec moy, et délaisse
Honneurs mondains tost finissantz.
Seule suis qui, certes, abaisse
L'orgueil et pompe des puissantz.

*Princeps magni, veni, perituraque gaudia linguas,
Quidquid et incerti mundus honoris habet.
Sola queo regum sublimes vincere fastus,
Imperio cedit splendida pompa meo.*

THIS prince, attended by his retinue, has just left his palace, when he is accosted by a poor woman, who holds by the hand an ill-clothed infant, and who implores the aid of this powerful prince. His courtiers eye her with scornful contempt, and the elector, equally insensible to the distresses of the widow and orphan, turns aside, with uplifted hands and every mark of repugnance, from the place where she bends before him for justice and charity. But Death, with a severe aspect, lays hands upon him, and is about to show him as little mercy as he has shown to others; with his iron grasp he prevents his removal, and cites him to the bar of the Ruler of all.





14. The Abbot.

Ipse morietur, quia non habuit disciplinam, et in multitudine stultitiæ suæ decipietur. *Proverb., 5.*

Il mourra, car il n'a reçu
 En soy aucune discipline,
 Et au nombre sera déçu
 De folie qui le domine.

*Jam moriere miser, quia disciplina piorum
 Nunquam vera tibi, sed simulata fuit.
 Stultitiæque tuæ magno deceptus acervo
 Es stolida falsum mente secutus iter.*

A FAT and pampered abbot is here suddenly assailed by Death, who, leaving his hour-glass in the branch of a tree, that he might have both hands at liberty, has deprived him of his mitre, with which he has crowned himself; and throwing his richly-decorated crosier over his shoulder, the *orarium* or fringed scarf which is appended to it floats gaily above him like the banner of a conqueror. With grotesque pomposity he pulls after him the unwieldy dignitary of the church, who is endeavouring to turn another way, and free himself from the clammy grip of the unwelcome messenger of mortality, by hurling his breviary at his assailant. The sequel is not shown, nor is it needed, the struggle, however long, leaves Death the victor.

15. The Abbess.

Laudavi magis mortuos quàm viventes.

Eccle., 4.

J'ay toujours les mortz plus loué
 Que les vifz, esquelz mal abonde,
 Toutes foyz la MORT m'a noué
 Au ranc de ceulx qui sont au monde.

*Plus ego laudavi Mortem, quam vivere, semper
 Vita quod hæc variis est onerata malis.
 Nunc ingrata tamen me mors detrusit ad illos,
 Fatorum rigida qui cecidere manu.*

THE gate of a convent forms the back-ground of this engraving, through the open portal of which Death, whose head is fantastically arrayed, drags the abbess by the scapulary which hangs around her neck. With a countenance expressive of horror she utters mournful regrets, and with clasped hands slowly and unwillingly follows him. The rosary hangs disregarded on her wrist, and the richly-chased crosier, the emblem of her clerical dignity, hangs equally uncared for upon her arm, dragging on the ground behind her. A life supposed to be devoted to the service of religion has not produced resignation in her soul. Death is to her a horrible and unwelcome visitor. The nun under the convent gate who beholds her superior thus carried away, appears to be equally agitated with terror, and makes the walls of the building resound with her cries.





16. The Nobleman.

Quis est homo qui vivet, et non videbit mortem, eruet animam
suam de manu inferi. *Psalm., 88.*

Qui est celui, tant soit grand homme,
Qui puisse vivre sans mourir ?
Et de la MORT, qui tout assomme,
Puisse son ame recourir ?

*Quis tam grandis homo, tam forti pectore vivit,
Cui maneant semper nescia vita necis ?
Quis vitare potest, quod deficit omnia, lethum,
Eripiens animam mortis ab ense suam ?*

A RICH and titled gentleman is here boldly but unsuccessfully grappling with Death. He has seized his bony assailant by the throat, and drawing his trusty sword, is defending himself in a manner that mortal enemy might fear. But Death wrestles with him, and placing one foot between his legs, appears to be in the act of throwing him on the funeral bier which stands beside him, covered with the mortuary cloth ornamented with the simple cross of redemption, in which he is to be borne to his last resting-place.

17. The Canon.

Ecce appropinquat hora.

Math., 26.

Tu vas au cheur dire tes heures,
 Priant Dieu pour toy, et ton proche.
 Mais il faut ores que tu meures.
 Voy tu pas l'heure qui approche?

*Tu petis ecce chorum pompa comitanti frequenti,
 Mox age, dic horas voce precante tuas.
 Nam te fata vocant, illā morieris in horā,
 Quæ tibi fert tristem non revocanda diem.*

THIS dignitary, who appears in the costume of the Premonstratensians, and who wears the richly and expensively furred cape peculiar to that class, with a lawn rochet and embroidered dalmatic beneath, seems to be intended as the type of a class of churchmen much condemned by writers just previous to the reformation for their luxurious living, their carelessness of their clerical duties, and love of worldly grandeur and secular amusements. Their love of hunting and hawking, and their assumption of worldly state in dress and appointments unsuited to the gravity of their position, was the constant complaint of moralists and satirists, and gave point to the attacks they levelled at them. The canon in the present engraving is followed to the church door by a page, a falconer who carries his hawk, and a jester or fool, all of whom were in those days the accompaniments of rank and pride. Death, however, who comes to his side, announces to him that he enters the church this time not to perform the service with cold heart and unworthy hands, but to go in as to his tomb. The sands of his glass are exhausted.





18. The Judge.

Disperdam judicem de medio ejus.

Amos., 2.

Du mylieu d'eulx vous osteray,
Juges corrompus par présentz.
Point ne serez de MORT exemptz.
Car ailleurs vous transporteray.

*Vos ego, qui donis corrupti falsa probatis,
E medio populi judicioque traham.
Non eritis justa fatorum lege soluti,
Quam modo, qui vivit, nemo cavere potest.*

THE well-fed legal functionary, who is here represented in the judgment seat, is listening to a case of might against right. The thin and care-worn features of the poor suitor are rendered more melancholy by the consciousness of want of money with which to bribe his judge. He stands despondingly before him, with his humble sheepskin cap held in his hands, and his eyes fixed on the ground. He knows that no purse is appended to his girdle, nothing is there but his knife in its leathern sheath. His rich opponent has a well-filled purse, and can stand arrogantly and with cap on head before his adjudicator, who devotes his entire attention and favour to this suitor. Death has indignantly cast his hour-glass on the ground and, with anger in his looks, wrests with both hands the ill-bestowed rod of office from its unworthy owner.

19. The Advocate.

Callidus vidit malum, et abscondit se innocens, pertransivit, et
afflictus est damno. *Prov., 22.*

L'homme cault a veu la malice
Pour l'innocent faire obliger,
Et puis par voye de justice
Est venu le pauvre affliger.

*Vidit homo cantus delicta, malumque probavit:
Pauperis et justi causa repulsa fuit.
Justitie titulo venatur egenus et insons,
Legibus et majus munera pondus habent.*

A SOMEWHAT similar scene to that last depicted is here given. A money-loving advocate is bestowing his attention so unreservedly on the gold with which a rich but dishonest client is filling his hand from a well-stored purse, that he pays no attention to the rapid close of his own life, to which Death solicits his notice by lifting his hour-glass, and directing him to look on that rather than on his ill-gotten gains. Behind this group stands the poor suitor, wringing his hands, and lamenting that his poverty disables him from coping with his rich and powerful adversary.





20. The Counsellor.

Qui obturat aurem suam ad clamorem pauperis, et ipse clamavit
et non exaudietur. Prov., 31.

Les riches conseillez toujours
Et aux pauvres clouéz l'orielle.
Vous criérez aux derniers jours,
Mais Dieu vous fera la pareille.

*Consulitis dices omni locupletibus horá,
Pauperis et clauso spernitis ore preces;
Sed vos extremá quandò clamabitis horá,
Sic etiam clausá negliget aure Deus.*

THE legal fraternity seem to have been especially obnoxious to the satire of our artist; and here we see a third instance of his exposure of their dishonest and peculant favoritism. The counsellor appears to be deeply engaged in giving, in the open street, to a rich man the advice which an ill-favoured demon, who strides across his neck, is blowing into his ears, while he pays no sort of regard to the poor man who is tapping his shoulder, and in the most suppliant posture asking to be heard. The expensive and fashionable costume of the rich suitor contrasts well with the ragged misery of the poor one; the well-furred gown and cap, and selfish face of the legal functionary lead us to infer his love of wealth to be greater than his love of justice. Death has crept on the ground before him, and elevating his glass, shows the conical heap of sand that has entirely run from its upper half, and with his spade seems prepared to stay all further progress in dishonesty.

21. The Preacher.

Væ qui dicitis malum bonum, et bonum malum, ponentes
tenebras lucem, et lucem tenebras, ponentes amarum dulce, et
dulce in amarum. *Isaïæ, 5.*

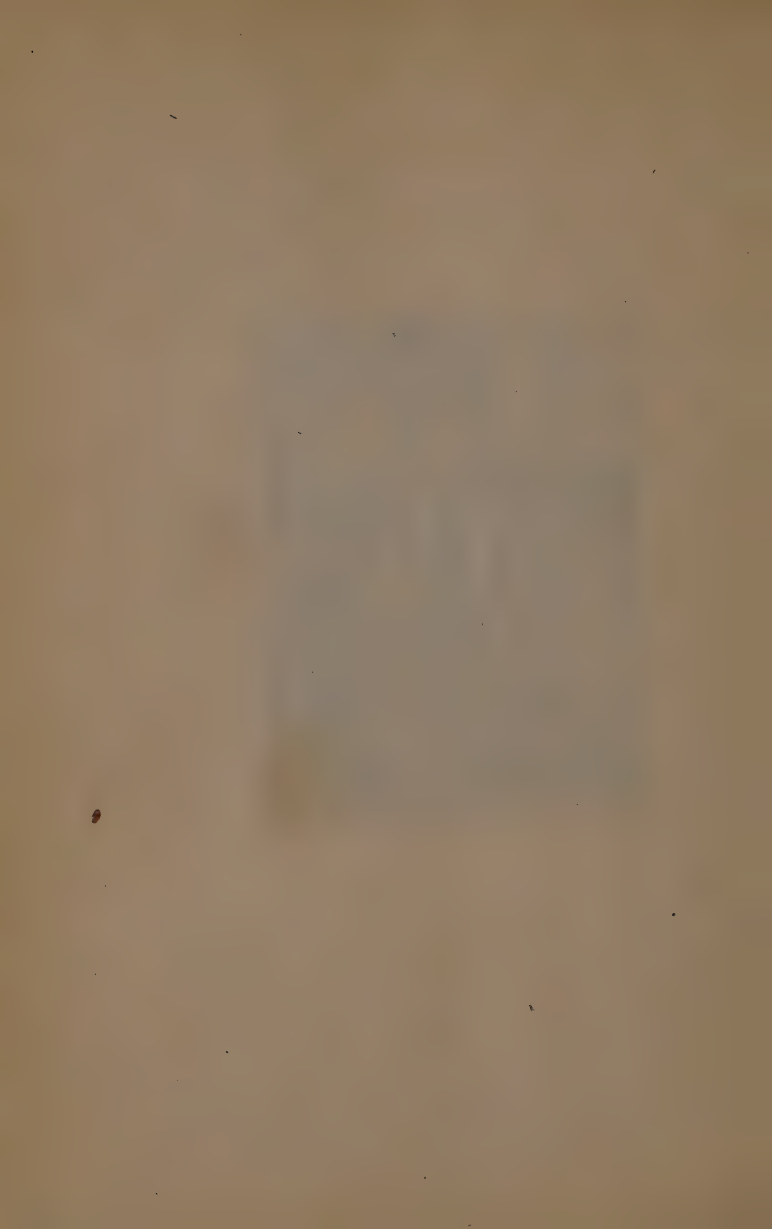
Mal pour vous qui ainsi osez
Le mal pour le bien nous blasmer,
Et le bien pour mal exposez,
Mettant avec le doux l'amer.

*Væ qui taxatis pro falso crimine rectum,
Quodque malum veri est, dicitis esse bonum,
Ex tenebris lucem facitis, de luce tenebras,
Mellaque cùm tristi dulcia felle datis.*

FROM the scriptural quotation given above, which is appended to this subject in the old edition, it is evident that the artist intended to represent this preacher as an hypocritical dealer in false doctrine, to which his hearers seem perfectly attentive, with the exception of one man who is dozing against the pulpit. The varied attitudes of them all are exceedingly natural and clever, as is also their expression of interest in the preacher. He is dealing forth his dogmas with a self-satisfied and plausible air, paying no attention whatever to the figure of Death behind him, who has cast a stole around his own neck, and with an expression of grotesque contempt holds over his head the jaw-bone of a dead body, which dumb monitor preaches to the thoughtful assembly the most eloquent of all sermons.







22. The Priest.

Sum quidem mortalis homo.—*Sap.*, 7.

Je porte le saint sacrement
Cuidant le mourant secourir,
Qui mortel suis pareillement,
Et comme luy me fault mourir.

*Ecce sacramentum cœlestia munera porto,
Undè ferat certam jam moriturus opem.
Sum quoque mortalis, simili quia sorte creatus,
Tempora cum venient, cogar, ut ille, mori.*

WE have here a procession in which Death very properly takes the lead. A priest, habited in rochet and stole, is carrying the sacrament in a veiled pix to a dying man. Before him Death marches, carrying a lantern, and ringing the admonitory bell. He has thrown a clerical cape over his shoulders, and tucked his hour-glass beneath his arm. The slow and stately step of the priest scarcely keeps pace with his strides. He is followed by an acolyte who carries the holy-water pot, beside whom walks a young woman carrying a lighted taper. The indication of another behind shows that there are a few more who have joined this last mission to a living man. The background is very characteristic of a town in the Low Countries, and the picturesque chimney emitting its volume of smoke worthy of notice for the elegance of its design.

23. The Mendicant Friar.

Sedentes in tenebris, et in umbra mortis, vinctos in mendicitate. Psalm., 106.

Toy qui n'as soucy, ni remord,
Si non de ta mendicité,
Tu sierras a l'ombre de MORT
Pour t'ouster de nécessité.

*Hæc via fallendi mortales pulchra videtur,
Quâ tegitur ficta religione malum.
Namque foris simulant magnum pietatis amore,
Omne voluptatum sed genus intus habent.
At cùm finis adest, veniunt tristissima dona,
Accumulat cunctos Mors inimica malos.*

THIS wandering friar attended by his dog appears to be returning to his monastery after he has received the contributions of the charitable. He has slung a wallet stored with gifts of food across his right shoulder, and he clasps in his left hand the small alms-box in which his daily deposits of money are placed under lock and key. To the leathern girdle which is buckled round his waist is appended his breviary, strongly bound in leather, which is left loose at one end and gathered in a fold to pass beneath the girdle, as was customary with religious office books of a portable character at the period when these designs were executed. Death rudely seizes him in his onward course, and, regardless of his cries, drags him a contrary way. The alarmed look of the friar, and the eager way in which he clutches at the provender and money-box, show that he anticipated the attack of an earthly robber—one who would deprive him of his goods, and not of his life.





24. The Nun.

Est via quæ videtur homini justa: novissima autem ejus
deducunt hominem ad mortem. *Prov., 4.*

Telle voye aux humains est bonne,
Et a l'homme très juste semble.
Mais la fin d'elle a l'homme sonne,
La MORT, qui tous pécheurs assemble.

Quid sacram terres mors invidiosa puellam?

Gloria de victâ virgine parva venit.

J procul, et senio confectis retia ponas:

Hanc sine deliciis incubuisse suis.

Conveniunt hilari lususque jocique juventæ,

Sumtaque furtivo gaudia læta roro.

THIS is another of that class of subjects which prove the designer of this series of engravings to have been no favourer of the institutions of popery. We see the interior of a nun's cell; the recluse, a young lady who has precipitately taken the veil, has admitted her former lover into her apartment, who is seated on her bed, and attracting her attention by an amorous ditty, which he accompanies on the theorbo-lute. She is kneeling before an altar with clasped hands, holding a rosary, but not praying; she is turning her head toward her lover, who entirely engrosses her attention. Death, as an aged female arrayed in a close coif and scapulary, is bending forward and extinguishing the candles on the altar, intimating the completion and consequences of criminal love.

25. The Aged Woman.

Melior est mors quam vita.—*Eccle.*, 30.

En peine ay vescu longuement :
 Tant que n'ay plus de vivre envie,
 Mais bien je croy certainement,
 Meilleure la MORT que la vie.

*Vita diù mihi pœna fuit, me nulla voluntas
 Incitat, ut cupiam longiùs esse super.
 Mors melior vitâ, certâ mihi mente videtur,
 Quæ redimit cunctis pectora fessa malis.*

WITH bowed head and tottering gait the aged female creeps slowly forward supported by her staff. The shattered hour-glass in the foreground is typical of her mortal condition. A triumphant skeleton, crowned with a funeral wreath, seems delighted to conduct one to the grave who has so long withstood his attacks. They are preceded by an equally joyous figure, who is dancing gaily onward to the music which he vigorously strikes from the dulcimer which is slung around his neck.





26. The Doctor.

Medice cura te ipsum.—*Lucæ*, 4.

Tu congnoys bien la maladie
 Pour le patient secourir,
 Et si ne sçais, teste estourdie,
 Le mal dont tu devras mourir.

*Tu benè cognoscis morbos, artemque medendi,
 Qua simul ægrotis subveniatur, habes.
 Sed caput ó stupidum, cùm fata aliena retardes,
 Ignoras morbi, quo moriere, genus.*

DEATH is here in perfect mockery introducing a sick and aged man to a physician, who, with complacent self-satisfaction, is about to examine the urinal which Death with ludicrous gravity is giving him. The contrast between the characters who take part in this scene is well supported. The healthy well-clad practitioner, the emaciated patient, leaning on his crutch, and warmly wrapped in a cloak and quilted cap, are as well conceived and executed as is the grim and grotesque figure of Death, who may be supposed to be saying, "Physician, heal thyself. Do'st thou think thou art able to save a man whom I have already in my power?"

27. The Astronomer.

Indica mihi si nosti omnia. Sciebas quod nasciturus esses, et
 numerum dierum tuorum noveras? *Job, 28.*

Tu dis par amphibologie
 Ce qu'aux aultres doibt advenir.
 Dy moy donc par astrologie
 Quand tu debvras a moy venir.

*Aspiciens curvum fictâ sub imagine cælum
 Eventura aliis dicere fata soles.
 Dic mihi, si bonus est venturæ sortis aruspex,
 Ad me quandò tibi fata venire dabunt?
 Inspice præsentem quam fert mea dextera sphæram
 Te meliùs fati premonet illa tui.*

RICHER than students in general, we here see an astronomer seated in an elegant apartment, with furniture of a richly-decorated and sumptuous kind. Upon the table appears his book, quadrant, and other implements. His eye and mind are both intently fixed upon the celestial globe which hangs above him. Death, as if in mockery of human science, directs his attention to the skull which he places before him, and appears to ask him whether his knowledge of judicial astrology can at all inform him of his own last hour, and whether a reflection on that would not be of more vital importance.





28. The Miser.

Stulte hac nocte repetunt animam tuam, et quæ parasti cujus
erunt ? *Luc., 12.*

Ceste nuit la MORT te prendra,
Et demain seras enchassé.
Mais dy moy, fol, a qui viendra
Le bien que tu as amassé ?

*Hæc te nocte manu rapiet mors tristis, avaræ,
Inque brevi tumbæ cràs tumultatus eris.
Ergò cùm procul hinc vitâ privatus abibis,
Quo bona perveniant accumulata tibi.*

IMMURED in a well-secured room, more like a malefactor's prison than the abode of wealth, we behold a miser seated amidst bags of gold and iron-bound chests, gorged with wealth, which in no degree is allowed to contribute to the comforts of a wretched existence thus passed in gloating over unused treasure. Secure from thieves, in a vaulted room of stone, the little light which enters gleaming only through the double grating of iron which obstructs the window, the miser is seated busily counting his money, happy in the secure indulgence of his avarice ; he is guarded from all intruders but Death, who has effected an entrance, and is rapidly depriving him of his much-loved gold, while he looks on in an agony of terror and despair, vainly imploring for mercy and assistance.

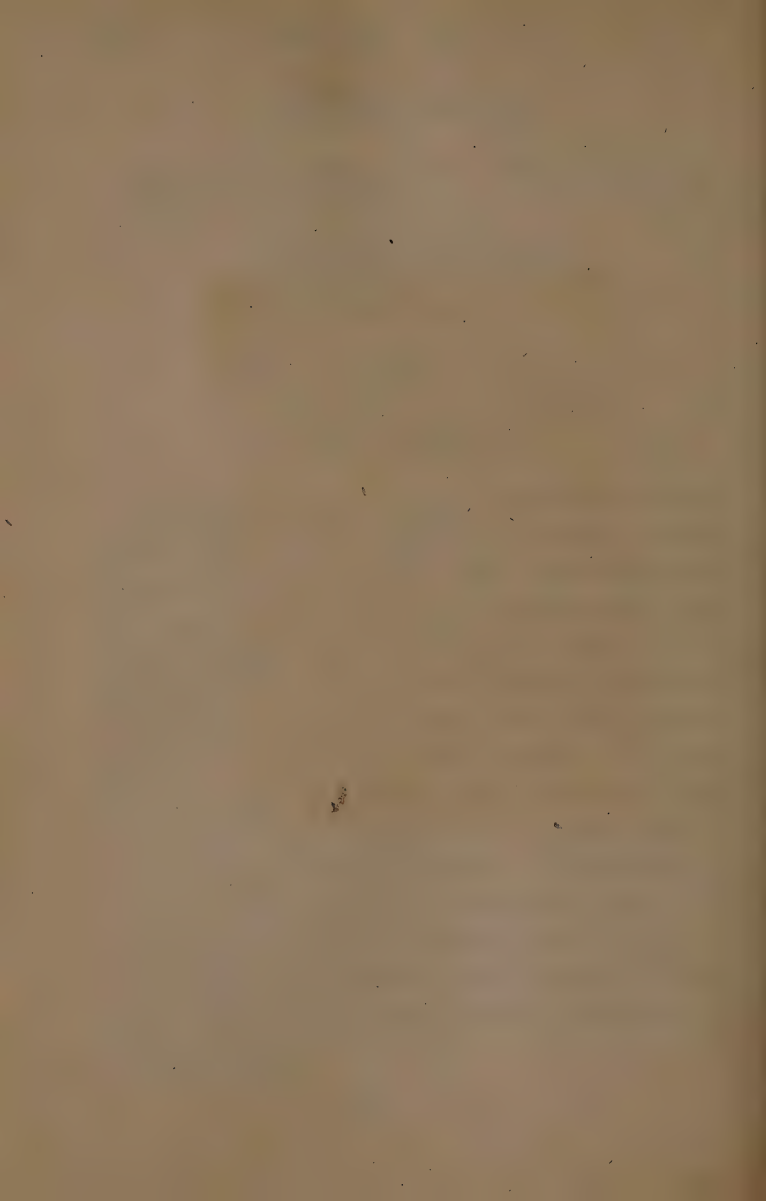
29. The Merchant.

Qui congregat thesauros mendacii vanus et excors est, et
impingetur ad laqueos mortis. *Prov., 21.*

Vain est cil qui amassera
Grands biens, et trésors pour mentir,
La MORT l'en fera repentir,
Car en ses lacs surpris sera.

*Thesauros cumulat qui per mendacia magnos,
Et bona corradit plurima, stulta facit.
Mors etenim quandò trahet in sua ratia captum,
Hunc faciet facti pœnituisse sui.*

COUNTING his gains upon the bales of merchandize which have enriched him, the merchant is busily engaged amid his attendants. His ships have escaped the dangers of the seas, his voyages have been prosperous; all his gains have rapidly increased, all his risks have been turned into profitable sureties, and fresh cargoes await his disposal, fresh voyages procure additions to his wealth. His position is prosperous, the world respect and bow to him, but Death appears in the midst of his worldly prosperity, and treats him with a rudeness unknown before. He seizes him by the hair of his head, and, throwing his velvet cloak rudely over his shoulder, drags him to the grave in the most undignified and unceremonious style. His factor flies in terror, and leaves his rich employer to his irrevocable fate.







30. The Shipwreck.

Qui volunt divites fieri incidunt in laqueum diaboli; et desideria multa, et nociva, quæ mergunt homines in interritum.

1. *Ad Tim.*, 6.

Pour acquerir des biens mondains
 Vous entrez en tentation,
 Qui vous met es perilz soubdains,
 Et vous maine a perdition.

*Ut bona mortales vobis mundana paretis,
 Objicitis variis pectora vestra malis:
 Sic fortuna potens in multa pericula lapsos
 Ad summum ducit perditionis iter.*

DEATH is here busily at work; a rich harvest awaits him. The elements have conspired in his favour, and a gallant ship with all on board are doomed to perish; the waves beat over the sides, the winds tear the sails and break the mast, assisted by Death himself, who gladly aids in the work of destruction. Stupified with despair, the captain mounts the head of the vessel wringing his hands, and unable to help himself or his crew, many of whom are preparing to leap into the sea. The entire scene exhibits one fearful confusion, to be succeeded only by the calm of death.

31. The Knight.

Subito morientur, et in media nocte turbabuntur populi, et auferrent violentum absque manu. *Job, 34.*

Peuples soubdain s'eslèveront
A l'encombre de l'inhumain,
Et le violent osteront
D'avec euls sans force de main.

*Insurgent populi contrà fera bella gerentem,
Qui nihil humanæ commoda pacis amat,
Magnanimo freti violentum robore tollent,
Ipse cadet nullâ percutiente manu.
Nam genus humanum validis qui læserit armis,
Auferet hunc fato Mors violenta gravi.*

RETURNING victorious from the battle-field, the knight, in the pride of power, looks for no vanquisher—

“For he is cased from head to foot
In panoply of steel,
From his nodding horse-hair plume, I trow,
To the spur upon his heel.”

But Death, fantastically arrayed in a hauberk of chain mail, with a breastplate, *taces* around the hips, and *tuilles* appended to cover the thighs, which loosely dangle upon the bony figure, more in mockery than for use, brings the warrior's victories to an end by a vigorous thrust of his lance, given with a quiet look of complacent contempt belonging only to so certain a victor.





32. The Count.

Quoniam cum interierit non sumet secum omnia, neque cum
eo descendet gloria ejus. *Psalm., 48.*

Avec soy rien n'emportera,
Mais qu'une foys la MORT le tombe,
Rien de sa gloire n'ostera,
Pour mettre avec soy dans sa tombe.

*Nobilis haud ullos secum portabit honores,
Dejiciet summo Mors ubi dura loco.
Non celebres titulos, claræque insignia gentis
Aufert; in tumba nil nisi pulvis erit.*

A MORAL lesson is here read to a rich oppressor. The count has strayed from his strong castle, situated upon rising ground in the distance, and is walking over his broad lands. He is attired in all the gorgeousness of fashionable pride: his hat is overloaded with feathers, his costly tunic striped with gold and colours, his boots slashed and ornamented, all telling his worldly grandeur; he tramples on the flail with contempt. Death, in the habit of a labourer, a class despised and impoverished by him, insults his pride by contemptuously destroying that emblem of his worldly state, his coat of arms; he has broken the shield upon which he had so proudly displayed his family bearings, and is dashing it to the ground in scorn. The battered helmet which formed the crest lies in the dirt at his feet, the extended wings and mantling or scarf which had also decorated it are scattered around in the same disrespectful style. The nobleman, abandoning his pride, is seized with despair as he views the assailant, and, clasping his hands, utters a cry of horror.

33. The Old Man.

Spiritus meus attenuabitur, dies mei breviabuntur, et solum
mihi superest sepulchrum. Job, 17.

Mes esperitz sont attendriz,
Et ma vie s'en va tout beau.
Las mes longz jours sont amoindriz,
Plus ne me reste qu'un tombeau.

*Attenuata meis fugerunt robora membris,
Vitaque currentis fluminis instar abit.
Quàm citò præteriit nunquam revocabile tempus,
Et reliquum tumbam nil mihi præter erit.
Tristia jam longæ pertæsus munera vitæ,
Me precor ut jubeant numina summa mori.*

THIS is one of the cleverest designs of the series. Death is leading a very old man towards the grave, who is bent under the weight of years and in the last stage of senility. With confiding imbecility he leans on the bony arm of his grim conductor, who amuses him by tinkling a dulcimer, which entirely engages his attention. He totters quietly and slowly along the churchyard, and has one foot unconsciously over the open grave; another step! and he is in his last resting-place. The helplessness and the second childhood of old age was never more perfectly portrayed.





34. The Bride.

Ducunt in bonis dies suos, et in puncto ad inferna descendunt.
Job, 21.

En biens mondains leurs jours despendent
 En voluptéz, et en liesse,
 Puis soubdain aux enfers descendent
 Où leur joye passe en tristesse.

*Consumunt vitam per gaudia multa puellæ,
 Omne voluptatum percipiuntque genus
 Tristitiâ curisque vacant, animoque soluto
 Otia deliciis condita semper amant :
 Sed misero tandem fato mittuntur ad orcum,
 Vertit ubi summus gaudia tanta dolor.*

YOUNG, gay, and beautiful, the bride is at her wedding toilet, and is receiving from the hands of her maid the rich robes and gold chains which are to adorn her. But Death is also at work, and instead of the chain of gold has placed around her neck a ghastly collar of bones. Upon a chest before her lies a convex looking-glass in a square frame, a brush, a comb, and other articles, among which Death has placed his hour-glass, as an emblem of that unexpected mingling of mortality with worldly thoughtlessness expressed in the sacred words, "in the midst of life we are in death."

35. The Newly-married Pair.

Me et te sola mors separabit.—*Rhut*, 14.

Amour qui unyz nous faict vivre,
 En foy nos cueurs préparera,
 Qui long temps ne nous pourra suyvre,
 Car la MORT nous separera.

*Hic est verus amor, qui nos conjungit in unum,
 Et ligat æterna mutua corda fide.
 Sed nimis heu parvo durabit tempore, namque
 Mors citò conjunctos dividet una duos.*

ARRAYED in the gayest wedding clothing, and in the first transports of a happy union, the newly-married couple are so entirely occupied with thoughts of each other, and so inebriated with their mutual happiness, that they do not perceive the grim messenger of mortality, who has taken the place of the legitimate minstrel, and is beating furiously upon the tabor slung around his waist. The cruel interruption to which all their enjoyments are destined can only be gladdening to the remorseless musician who precedes them.





36. The Duchess.

De lectulo super quem ascendisti non descendes, sed morte
morieris. 4 Reg., 1.

Du liét sus le quel as monté
Ne descendras a ton plaisir.
Car MORT t'aura tantost dompté,
Et en brief te viendra saisir.

*Quem premis, ó virgo, juvenili corpore lectum,
Non hinc dura tibi surgere fata dabunt.
Nam priùs exanimem te Mors violenta domabit,
Pallidaque in tumulum corpora falce trahet.*

THIS high-born lady is rudely awakened from her sleep by two hideous figures, whose half-decayed flesh and ragged hair are as repulsive as their rudeness must be to one used to the refinements of life. She is aroused by the vulgar notes of a bad violin harshly played by the grim performer, whose companion, seizing her by one leg, drags her forcibly from the bed on which she reposes. Its carved posts and embroidered curtains will fearfully contrast with the grave which they have prepared for her. Her astonishment seems to be shared by her favorite dog who has been sleeping beside her.

37. The Pedlar.

Venite ad me qui onerati estis.—*Matth.*, 11.

Venez, et apres moy marchez,
 Vous qui etes par trop chargé.
 C'est assez suivy les marchez :
 Vous serez par moy dechargé.

Huc ades, et promptus vestigia nostra sequaris,

Pondera qui fesso tergo tanta geris.

Jam satis es nummos pro merce forumque secutus :

Omnibus his curis exoneratus eris.

HEAVILY laden with goods of various kinds, and attended by his faithful dog, the travelling pedlar is arrested by Death, who is about to put a speedy end to his toilsome pilgrimage and care, and ease him of his burden ; but the poor and hard-working man is willing still to take his chances in a troublesome world, and risk the shade for the sake of the sunshine of life. He vehemently presses forward, and points to the distant town to which he is travelling with so many necessaries, and where he hopes to gain the profit of his foot-sore wanderings ; but Death forces his steps another way, and the victory is joyously announced by another grim companion, who gaily scrapes on an unwieldy monochord, an instrument consisting, as its name implies, of a single string stretched over a hollow tube, the disagreeable monotony of which must be singularly unpleasant when played by such a hand.





38. The Ploughman.

In sudore vultus tui vesceris pane tuo.—*Gen.*, 4.

A la sueur de ton visage
Tu gaigneras ta pauvre vie.
Après long travail, et usaige,
Voicy la MORT qui te convie.

*Ipse tibi multo panem sudore parabis.
Præbebit victum nec nisi cultus ager.
Post varios usus rerum vitæque labores,
Finiet ærumnas Mors violenta tuas.*

THE laborious occupation of tilling the ground, the curse imposed on our erring father Adam, is here again shown. Death is also an attendant on the work of this poor man, as he is represented to have been on that of our progenitor. The cheerful scene and smiling landscape would seem to dispel all gloom, and the happy prospect of future harvest cheer the labouring hind: but Death is here to again assert his supremacy; he urges the horses and wears out the labourer; both man and beast, tree and plant, own the baneful sway of life's relentless enemy.

39. The Young Child.

Homo natus de muliere, brevi vivens tempore repletus multis
miseriis, qui quasi flos egreditur, et conteritur et fugit velut
umbra. Job, 24.

Tout homme de la femme yssant
Rempli de misere, et d'encombre,
Ainsi que fleur tost finissant,
Sort et puis fuyt comme faict l'umbre.

*Omnis homo veniens gravida mulieris ab alvo
Nascitur ad variis tempora plena malis.
Flòs cito marcescens veluti decedit, et ille
Sic perit, et tanquàm corporis umbra fugit.*

THE riches of the poor are their affections ; their want of wealth is often made up to them by the strong love which they bear to each other. In the subject here given the artist has exhibited this trait of character. Death enters a wretched hovel, with decayed walls, an open doorway, and a roof which affords no shelter, and carries from the cheerless hearth the young child who has been watching with his brother the mess of pottage his poor mother has been preparing. The impoverished widow's only wealth is their love ; and her despair and horror is forcibly depicted when she finds her youngest and favorite child carried off by unfeeling Death, thus rendering her wretched home most desolate.





40. The Soldier.

Cum fortis armatus custodit atrium suum, etc. . . Si autem fortior eo superveniens vicerit eum, universa ejus arma aufert in quibus confidebat. *Luc., 11.*

Le fort armé en ieune corps
 Pense auoir seure garnison :
 Mais MORT plus forte le met hors
 De sa corporelle maison.

*Fortis et armatus dum vis et vita supersit,
 Tuta sui servant atria præsidi:
 Ecce supervenit junctis Mors fortior armis,
 Hunc male quæ tuta de statione rapit.*

THE field of battle is the harvest field of Death. Trampling like a proud victor over the bodies of the combatants, he is assailing one of the bravest, who has been hitherto invincible, and who brandishes his powerful two-handed sword with a vigour which no mortal power could well resist, but he has here to encounter a foe whom he confronts in vain. Armed only with a thigh-bone, Death, certain of victory, scornfully assails the living warrior, so soon to be reckoned among the dead at his feet. Another active skeleton runs in the background, beating his war-note on the drum, and leading over the brow of the hill a fresh detachment of soldiers to do battle anew and glut the greedy grave.

41. The Gamblers.

Quid prodest homini, si universum mundum lucretur, animæ
autem suæ detrimentum patiatur. *Mat., 16.*

Que vault à l'homme, tout le monde
Gagner d'hazard, et chance experte,
S'il reçoit de sa vie immonde
Par MORT, irreparable perte ?

*Quid prodest homini totum si sortibus orbem,
Ac aleæ innumeras arte lucretur opes :
Detrimentum animæ fato patiatur acerbo,
Nulla quod ars, fraus, sors, post reparare queat ?*

SIN and Death here assist each other. The evil demon, the constant attendant on the gaming table, is impatiently awaiting his prey. The time has come, Death seizes one gambler by the throat, who falls back in a fit, and the impatient demon has scarcely allowed the grip of Death to become firmly fixed ere he has seized him by the hair, and is about to clutch him with his other claw and fly with him to perdition, but Death appeals to his patience for one moment, when his own work being done he will resign him quietly. The action of the gambler on the left almost seems to indicate that he consigns the dying man to the evil one ; while the third, taking advantage of the confusion, quietly gathers to himself the money on the table.





42. The Drunkards.

Ne inebriemini vino, in quo est luxuria.—*Ephes.*, 5.

De vin (auquel est tout excès)
 Ne vous enyurez pour dormir
 Sommeil de MORT, qui au décès
 Vous face l'ame, et sang vomir.

*Parcite mortales nimio vos mergere Baccho,
 Cui Venus expumans, luxus et omnis inest :
 Ne veniens cogat somno, vinoque sepultos,
 Mors animam vomitu reddere purpuream.*

A GROUP of the votaries of Bacchus, the miscalled “jolly god,” here are seen indulging in bestial orgies. The table is covered with flagons and capacious drinking-glasses, and an attendant adds a dish containing such food only as shall act as a provocative to excess in drinking, which undoubtedly furnishes Death with a powerful means for committing his ravages. With a broad grin of satisfaction, Death attends the table as a servitor ; having a napkin on his arm and a flagon in his hand, he pours wine in great abundance down the throat of one of these drunkards, who thus becomes an easy prey to the destroyer.

43. The Fool.

Quasi agnus lasciviens, et ignorans, nescit quod ad vincula stultus trahatur. *Prov., 7.*

Le fol vit en ioye, et deduict
 Sans sçauoir qu'il s'en va mourant,
 Tant qu'à sa fin il est conduit,
 Ainsi que l'agneau ignorant.

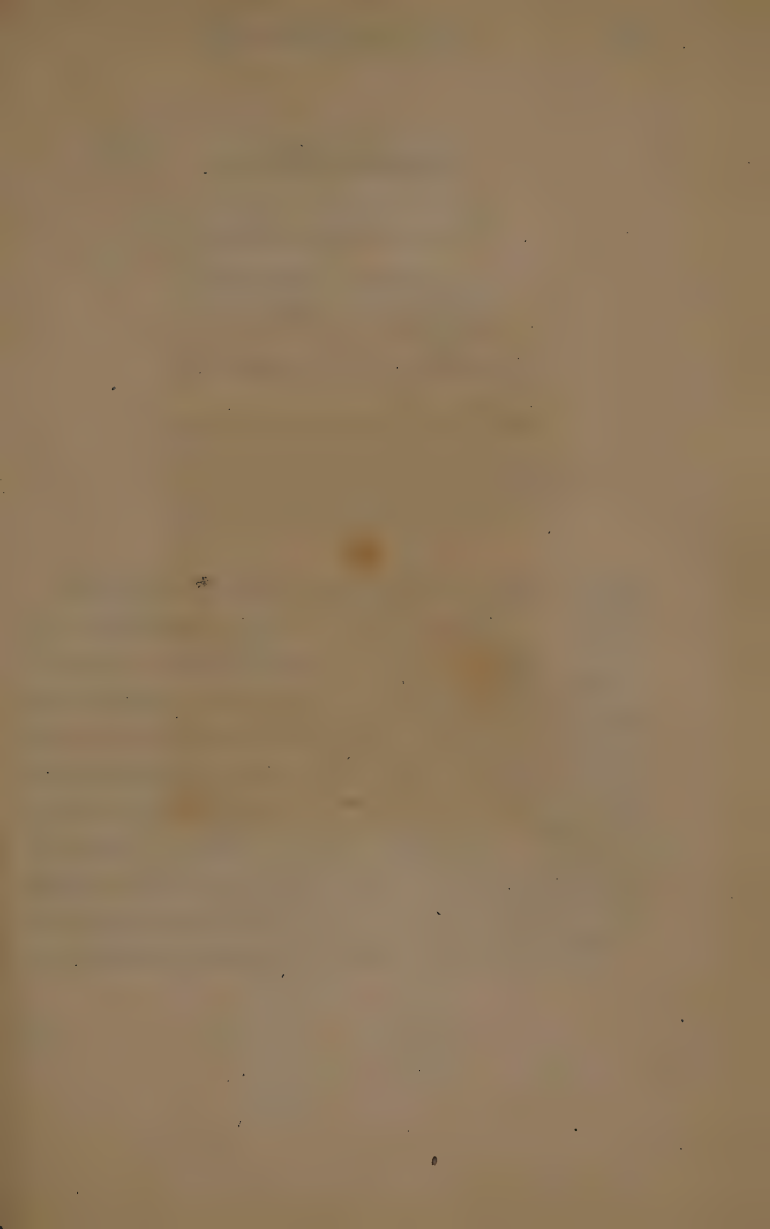
*Insanire, et scire nihil, suavissima vita est :
 Optima non itidem. Quid furiosus agit ?
 Securus fati, simplex lascivit ut agnus
 Nescius ad mortis vincula quod trahitur.*

A WRETCHED idiot, one of that class kept about the establishments of the great for their amusement, at the time when these series of engravings were originally published, is here led away by Death, who, dancing to the music of the bagpipe, with the most winning inclination of head, courts him to join the dance. The movement of the fool's legs shows that the fascination is effectual, but with his usual love for mischief, he levels a blow at Death with the inflated bladder he holds in his hand. This subject most probably furnished Shakespeare with his allusion to "the Fool and Death" in *Pericles*, act iii, scene 2, and in *Measure for Measure*, act iii, scene 1 :

"——— Thou art Death's fool ;
 For him thou labour'st by thy flight to shun,
 And yet run'st toward him still."







44. The Robber.

Domine, vim patior.—*Isaiæ*, 38.

La foible femme brigandee,
 Crie, ô Seigneur, on me fait force
 Lors de Dieu la MORT est mandee,
 Qui les estrangle a dure estorce (*Sic*).

*Ut jugulent homines surgunt de nocte latrones
 Tollunt quæ plenis fert anus in calathis.
 Vim patior, clamat, Mortem mittit Deus ultor,
 Quæ per carnificem strangulat hos laqueo.*

THROUGH the thickest part of a wood, a poor country girl is returning from the town to which she has travelled for some articles of food and clothing. As she goes wearily homeward, a robber dismounts from his horse, and, with repulsive features and dire determination, deprives her of her goods, and clutching her by the throat, seems determined to sacrifice her life also, should she resist his efforts or cry for assistance. Death comes unexpectedly to her aid, and he forcibly removes her assailant, anticipating by a few days the hangman, who would have punished such crime upon the scaffold.

45. The Blind Man.

Cæcus cæcum ducit : et ambo in foveam cadunt.—*Matth.*, 15.

L'aveugle un autre aveugle guide,
 L'un par l'autre en la fosse tombe :
 Car quand plus oultre aller il cuide,
 LA MORT l'homme iecte en la tombe.

*Pro duce cæcus habet cæcum. Dùm incertus uterque
 Ambulat : in foveam lapsus uterque ruit
 Ulterius : nam sperat homo dùm pergere, tumbæ
 In tenebras illum Mors mala præcipitat.*

THE poor sightless beggar-man has here met with a pitiless and rude conductor. Death, seizing him by his cloak and staff, is leading him along a wretched road, covered with stones and clods of earth, over which he stumbles fearfully. With that air of grim satisfaction at mortal mishaps produced by himself, by which the designer of this series has characterised Death, he appears to enjoy the confusion and terror he here occasions. The alms-dish and rosary at the beggar's girdle show that he is provided for spiritual duties as well as creature comforts.





46. The Waggoner.

Corruit in curru suo.—*I. Chronic.*, 22.

Au passage de MORT peruerse
 Raison, chartier tout esperdu,
 Du corps le char, et cheuaux verse,
 Le vin (sang de vie) espandu.

*Fertur equis auriga, nec audit currus habenas
 Dùm Mortis pugnat cum ratione timor.
 Corporis exiliente rota, devolvitur axis ;
 Vina fluunt ruptis sanguinolenta cadis.*

DEATH is here again busily engaged in mischief. A waggon laden with wine-casks is upset, and one of the horses thrown down and probably killed beneath it. A grisly skeleton is carrying off the wheel which he has just torn away, occasioning all this misadventure, and another is busily employed in untwisting the stays which secure one of the casks, and thus further aiding the work of destruction. The terrified waggoner is uttering loud lamentations at this unlooked-for misfortune, and uplifts his clasped hands in helpless despair. For some other remarks on this subject see Introduction, pp. 51, 52, and 59.

47. The Beggar.

Miser ego homo ! quis me liberabit de corpore mortis hujus ?
Rom., 7.

Qui hors la chair veult en Christ viure
 Ne craint MORT, mais dit un mortel,
 Helas, qui me rendra delivre
 Pouure homme de ce corps mortel ?

*Qui cupit exolvi, et cum Christo vivere, mortem
 Non metuit. Tali voce sed astra ferit :
 Infelix ego homo ! Quis ab hujus corpore mortis
 Liberet (heu) miserum ? me miserum eripiat ?*

THIS cut was introduced into the series under the circumstances narrated in our Introduction, p. 62. Death does not appear in it. It certainly seems to have been added to the rest with little reason or propriety. The wretched, unclothed, lame mendicant is seated upon the ground, and appears to be calling on Death to release him from mortal misery.





48.

Confodietur jaculis.—*Exodi.*, 9.

L'eage du sens, du sang l'ardeur
Est legier dard, et foible escu
Contre MORT, qui vn tel dardeur
De son propre dard rend vaincu.

*Hic puer ætate imprudens, est sanguine fervens,
Cum parma jaculum (cætera nudus) habet.
Infelix puer, atque impar congressus atroci
Morti quæ jaculis confodit hunc propriis.*

[This is one of those irrelevant subjects first added to the series of the Dance of Death in the edition of 1547, and which have no real connexion with the rest. They have received some interpretations of a fanciful kind to connect them with the series (see Introduction, p. 42), and the verses above contain some forced conceits for the same purpose. In the German edition of these plates, 1832, the one before us is named "The Image of the Last Day," and to it are applied the words of Timothy, chap. iii, v. 1, 2, and 2d of Peter, chap. ii, v. 10, 19. No. 49, a group with emblems of the chase, has Matthew, c. xi, v. 16, 17, appended to it. No. 50, termed *Gluttony*, but certainly a Bacchanalian procession, has for text, Philip, c. iii, v. 19, and Romans, c. xiii, v. 13; while No. 51, termed *Pride*, but in reality a group of children bearing military trophies, has a motto from Psalm xvii, v. 10.]

49.

Pueri in ligno corruerunt.—*Thren.*, 5.

Petis enfans vont par la voye
Cheuauchant baston à desrois
MORT les rue ius comme Troye
Perit par vn cheual de bois.

*Iudere par impar, equitare in arundine longâ,
Socratico et pueros currere more iuvat.
Ecce repente ruunt equites in caudice ligni
Ligneus ut Trojæ pergama vertit equus.*





50.

Quorum deus venter est.—*Philip.*, 3.

Comme enfans vivent sans soucy,
Ceux qui font leur dieu de leur ventre
Gros et gras on les porte ; ainsi
MORT les portera secz au centre.

*Non secus ac pueri sine sollicitudine vivant,
Quorum maximus est venter, et esca Deus.
Quem pinguem et nitidum bene curata cute tollunt
Fronde coronatum, Mors leve tollet onus.*

51.

Portium divites spolia.—*Isaiæ*, 3.

Pour les victoires triomphées
Sur les plus forts des humains cœurs,
Les despoilles dresse en trophées
La MORT vaincresse des vainqueurs.

*Clara triumphatis hominum victoria summis,
Ut summos doceat quosquē dedisse manus :
Dividit erectis spolia exarmata trophæis
Victrix victorum Mors violenta virum.*





52. The Last Judgment.

Omnes stabimus ante tribunal Domini.

Roma, 14.

Vigilate et orate, quia nescitis qua hora venturus sit dominus.

Matth., 24.

Deuant le throne du grand iuge
Chascun de soy compte rendra :
Pourtant veillez, qu'il ne vous iuge,
Car ne sçaeuz quand il viendra.

*Quilibet ut possit rationem reddere, cuncti
Judicis æterni stabimus ante thronum.*

*Propterea toto vigilemus pectore, ne cum
Venerit, irato judicet ore Deus.*

*Et quia nemo tenet venturi judicis horam,
Esse decet vigiles in statione pios.*

THE series commencing with the introduction of Death to the world through man's disobedience, here concludes with man's final triumph over Death through the Redeemer, who appears seated on a rainbow, displaying his wounds, and with a halo of glory around him. His feet rest on a celestial sphere, in the centre of which the earth is suspended. In the clouds on each side are saints and angels; on the earth beneath appear our first parents and their numerous progeny appealing to divine mercy. Now is "Death swallowed up in victory," and the erring but repentant and redeemed sons of earth may sing the triumphant song, "O, Death, where is thy sting? O, grave, where is thy victory?"

53. Death's Coat of Arms.

Memorare novissima, et in eternum non peccabis.—*Ecles.*, 7.

Si tu veulx vivre sans peché,
 Voy ceste image à tous propos,
 Et point ne seras empesché,
 Quand tu t'en iras à repos.

*Si cupis immunem vitiis traducere vitam,
 Ista sit ante oculos semper imago tuos.
 Nam te ventura crebro de morte monebit.
 Quam repetens omni tempore cautus eris.
 Da precor ut vero te pictore Christe colamus:
 Omnibus ad cælum sic patefiet iter.*

A TORN and broken escutcheon exhibits a Death's head with a large worm twining about the jaws. A barred helmet seen in front, like that of a sovereign prince, and typical of Death's power, surmounts the escutcheon; the mantling which falls around it, not, as usually delineated, like an enriched and decorated ornament, but taking the form of a decayed and ragged cere-cloth. As a crest stands the hour-glass of mortality between two bony arms, which elevate a sharp and pointed stone. The whole is emblematic of decay and destruction; the platform or tombstone upon which it is placed is broken and ruinous, and the distant mountains with their summits shaded by clouds aid in the gloominess of the scene. The lady and gentleman who act as supporters to the sombre coat are asserted to represent Holbein and his wife. The gentleman seems to be directing the spectators' attention to this memento of Death's power, and enforcing its meaning and universal applicability.



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